

Myth and Argument in Plato's *Phaedo*

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2019

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
DIETRICH SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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2019

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University of Pittsburgh, 2019

This dissertation argues for reading the myth at the end of Plato's *Phaedo* as part of the overall argumentative structure of the dialogue. Using the Toulmin method of argument analysis, I analyze each of Socrates' proofs for the immortality of the soul, as well as the myth and the argument before the proofs. These analyses show that each of Socrates' arguments rely on the hypothesis of the Forms, and that some of them also employ the hypothesis that the soul is immortal. I then analyze the demonstrative status of each argument, by which I mean how strongly or weakly Socrates claims to have 'proven,' 'shown,' etc. the conclusion of the argument. The result of this analysis is that the arguments that do *not* use the hypothesis of the soul's immortality all have a higher demonstrative status than those that do, suggesting that the hypothesis of immortality leads to somewhat less sure conclusions than the hypothesis of the Forms. I then argue that we should read the argumentative structure of the dialogue as an example of the method of hypothesis as Socrates characterizes it in *Phaedo*: the hypothesis of the Forms is a higher hypothesis while the hypothesis of the soul's immortality is a lower hypothesis, and the progression of arguments in the dialogue (including the myth) first ascends from the lower hypothesis used in the preliminary argument to the higher hypothesis used in the proofs of immortality, then descends to the lower hypothesis again through the myth. Finally, I argue that the myth has both a rational persuasive function and a non-rational one. Its rational persuasive function is to show the consequences of the hypothesis of immortality, which should give us

greater confidence in that hypothesis. Its non-rational persuasive function is to charm away the fear of death and draw its hearers toward a philosophical life. I conclude by identifying several structural and thematic elements of the *Phaedo* myth that are present also in the myths of *Phaedrus* and *Republic*, suggesting that Socrates' eschatological myths have some structural and thematic consistency across dialogues.

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Preface

With my formal education having been more prolonged and more storied than I would have anticipated, I find myself at its culmination wanting to thank quite a few people. Most recently, I have received an immense amount of support and critique from my committee members—Jacques Bromberg, Nicholas Jones, Jennifer Whiting, and Christian Wildberg. My dissertation advisor, Christina Hoenig, merits an unparalleled amount of gratitude for overseeing this project. Christina helped me develop the idea behind this dissertation through many drafts of my prospectus, and I will be ever grateful for her thoughtful responses to all of my work, and for her unending encouragement, especially when I found myself working full-time throughout the latter half of my time at Pitt. I would also like to thank Jacques in particular for stepping in as my advisor during a semester when Christina was on sabbatical, and for the feedback and encouragement he gave me then and has given since. I should also like to thank each committee member for their willingness to act in such a capacity for a student whom they never even had had the opportunity to teach.

Prior to my time at Pitt, I had the pleasure of working with a number of faculty without whom this dissertation would have taken on quite a different shape, if ever it should have come to be at all. From Evergreen, thanks are due to Andrew and Chuck most of all, who were my first teachers of Classics and philosophy. Andrew taught me to see ancient texts as not only relevant but emotive, and to ask why we have such views about and reactions to them; Chuck taught me to contextualize ideas within their history; both pushed me to consider why virtue, truth, and beauty still compel us today. And then there was Sara, who taught me that good editing is far more important than good writing, a conviction that both got me through earlier graduate schooling and gave me the courage to turn a flashing cursor on a blank Word document into this piece.

From St. John's College, a couple of faculty were quite formative to my ideas and approach to the world. I owe a great debt to Ms. Blettner, who taught me just as much about my own weaknesses as she did Greek, and whose passing was a true loss to this world. Mr. Russell made a most excellent intellectual provocateur, teaching me a great deal about humility along the way.

The friends I have made at Pitt and in Pittsburgh have been of immeasurable importance to me; they are truly the *sine quibus non* of my time here. With all my heart I should like to thank Mike Strati, Thomas Marré, Kathryn Lindeman, Mikio Akagi, and Preston Stovall. Stephen Makin deserves special attention for teaching me much about the good life and how to cook chicken. Along the way, I've lost touch with a few people who nevertheless have had an effect on the shape of my thinking that they may not ever know. Thank you also to BCG, LT, MEH, MF, and SDE.

For nearly five years now I have been teaching at a school that has given me both institutional support and quite a number of friends. I should like to thank The Ellis School for its funding of the second half of my degree, as well as the friends I have met there, especially Adam Bisno, Ashley Dotson, Elisa Hill, Kristy Tomashewski, Michele Lombardi, Liz Gray, and Susan Corbesero. A particularly large debt of gratitude is owed to all my students at Ellis, who have been some of my most fervent supporters.

Thanks are due also to Mark, John, Tim, Matthew, and Charlie, who saw me write more of this document than I should like to admit.

I'd like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Charles Higginson and Laurie McLane-Higginson. I hope I have begun to vindicate their longstanding belief in me.

Chapter 1

Many people, even scholars of Classics and philosophy, know not what to do when they encounter one of Plato's myths. Often they gloss over these myths with little commentary, particularly when they are familiar with Plato's so-called critique of myth in *Republic*: why should we take Plato's myths seriously, when this same author mounts such a scathing attack on traditional mythology and poetry? It is tempting to focus on the attitude toward mythology expressed in *Republic* because it is relatively easy to understand, whereas it is much more difficult to understand why an author seemingly so focused on argumentation in the form of dialectic would suddenly 'resort to myth' to make a point, particularly when that same author seems to tell us to be skeptical of mythology. The fundamental aim of this dissertation is to show that a certain class of myth Socrates tells in the Platonic dialogues—eschatological myths—are meant to be neither playful nor unserious. They are, rather, integral parts of the dialogues that both expand on the argumentative structures of the dialogues as well as impart their own persuasive function.

My focus here will be on Plato's *Phaedo*, and in particular how its myth is a part of the dialogue's overall argumentative structure. The argumentative structure of *Phaedo* is generally thought to be four arguments for the immortality of the soul (70c-107a), followed by a myth about the geography and character of the earth and underworld and the fate of the soul after death (107c-115a). This makes the *Phaedo* a particularly good dialogue for comparing the role of myth with the role of argument, because *Phaedo* contains four discrete and clearly delineated arguments, as well as a myth, in more or less rapid succession. However, I argue that this common characterization of the structure of the dialogue is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. First, this view of the dialogue's structure completely ignores the 'preliminary' arguments Socrates

makes before giving the four arguments for the immortality of the soul, as well as their role in the overall argumentative structure of the dialogue. These ‘preliminary’ arguments are often ignored because they do not *argue for* the immortality of the soul, but rather *assume* that the soul is immortal. But it is only because Socrates’ interlocutors object to these arguments, thinking that the soul may be mortal, that Socrates gives his four arguments for immortality. These ‘preliminary’ arguments are thus integral to the overall argumentative structure of the dialogue, because they question the hypothesis that the soul is immortal.

A second reason for finding the common interpretation of the structure of the dialogue to be unsatisfactory is that it is unable to make sense of the Method of Hypothesis that Socrates uses in his Final Argument for the immortality of the soul.¹ Socrates explains the Method of Hypothesis as a process of ascent and descent to higher and lower hypotheses, as the inquiry demands. We must descend to lower hypotheses in order to examine the consequences of a higher hypothesis, but in order to *justify* any hypothesis, one must ascend to a higher one. The common interpretation of this process takes the Hypothesis of the Forms to be a lower Hypothesis,² one from which someone might ascend to a higher one. However, scholars have been at a loss to give a compelling account of what such a higher Hypothesis might be. The solution to this, I argue, is to understand the Hypothesis of the Forms as Socrates’ highest hypothesis. The lower Hypothesis Socrates references is, rather, the Hypothesis that the soul is immortal, and this is why the dialogue begins by ascending to the hypothesis of the Forms (in the shift from the preliminary arguments to the arguments for immortality, which are all based on the hypothesis of the Forms), and concludes its

¹ In this argument, Socrates says that because Forms do not admit their opposites, nor do things that have an opposite because of their nature or Form (i.e., snow is by nature cold, so it cannot admit heat), and because soul is the source of life, and life is the opposite of death, soul cannot admit death.

² There is, however, no textual evidence for this interpretation, which I discuss at length in Chapters 2.3 and 3.2.

overall argument by descending to a lower hypothesis (in the shift from the arguments for immortality to the myth, which is based on the hypothesis that the soul is immortal). The argumentative structure of *Phaedo* as a whole then comes into focus as an example of precisely the ascent and descent to higher and lower hypotheses that Socrates describes—but only if we take a broader view of the argumentative structure than is commonly held, one that includes both the preliminary arguments and the myth.

My analysis requires that we view the myth in *Phaedo* as an argument in itself, related to but distinct from the other arguments in the dialogue. The question then arises as to what persuasive function the myth might have that could not be performed by a propositional argument. I argue that the persuasive nature of a myth need not be fully rational or fully non-rational. The *Phaedo* myth persuades in a rational way because it examines the consequences of the hypothesis of immortality, and in so doing, gives us greater credence in that hypothesis. But it also persuades in a non-rational way by working to, as Socrates says, “charm away” the “fears” of its hearers—a function that the propositional arguments cannot perform. The myth thus relates to the propositional arguments in the dialogue in a rational way because it examines the consequences of those arguments, strengthening our trust in the hypothesis of immortality; however, the myth also has a unique role to play in the dialogue—one that the propositional arguments cannot play—because it “charms” its hearers in a non-rational way.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I outline three thematic features and six argumentative features of the myth in *Phaedo* in order to argue that these features can be seen either in whole or for the most part in other dialogues that contain eschatological myths. The myths of *Phaedrus* and *Republic* have a striking resemblance to the myth in *Phaedo*, both in their thematic elements and in their relationship to propositional arguments in the dialogues. Because of this, I argue, Socrates can be

seen to have a more consistent view across dialogues of the afterlife, and its accompanying ethical imperatives, than it may first seem. In relief to these three myths that are quite consistent in their thematic and argumentative features, I briefly examine also the myth in *Gorgias*, and suggest that this myth does not have as many of the thematic and argumentative features as the other dialogues because of the context in which the dialogue takes place, namely, because of the antagonistic and stubbornly incredulous attitude of his interlocutors. Finally, I suggest that future study on the role of eschatological myth in Plato's dialogues focus on their argumentative and rationally persuasive functions, and in particular how they use the hypothesis of the Forms, or other hypotheses Socrates puts forth in the dialogues, in order to make their arguments.

1.1 A General Review of the Current Literature on Myth in Plato

1.1.1 A Brief History of *Muthos*

Prior to the late twentieth century, many scholars of Plato and of the ancient world generally tended to assume a stark contrast between *muthos* and *logos*.³ Their narrative, re-popularized by Nestle's 1940 *Vom Mythos Zum Logos*, claimed that between approximately the sixth and fourth centuries BCE, a great intellectual shift took place in which the prior trust in *muthos* came to be replaced by trust in *logos*. Before, in archaic Greece, traditional *muthoi* were passed on

³ Reviews of such literature can be found in Buxton's (1999) Introduction to a volume he edited, *From Myth to Reason?*, as well as in Chapter 1 of Morgan's (2000) *Myth and Philosophy from the Presocratics to Plato*. Two great exceptions to this general view were Thiemann (1892) and Döring (1893), the latter of whom, Moors wrote in 1982, held still a great influence on the study of Plato's eschatological myths in particular.

through generations, often in the form of poetry, in order to explain various aspects of the world and of the human condition. These μῦθοι relied heavily on anthropomorphized gods, as exemplified by the poems of Homer and Hesiod. However, the time between the sixth and fourth centuries BCE saw a new form of explanation that was naturalist and materialist, as exemplified by the Presocratics, as well as by Herodotus and Thucydides. This shift was then characterized by Nestle and others, a bit too swiftly and over-tidily, as one from μῦθος to λόγος.

In their defense, Nestle and others were following the ancients' own characterization of themselves in claiming a fundamental shift from μῦθος to λόγος. As Morgan puts it, "why is the Greek miracle the freedom of *logos* from myth? Because that is what the Greek philosophers tell us to think" ([2000], 33).⁴ When it came to Plato in particular, the ancient rationalists had so little faith in μῦθος that they found in his myths evidence that "he was willing to revert to old superstitions."⁵ The Neoplatonists, attempting to come to Plato's defense, argued that his μῦθοι were to be understood allegorically in order to discover their underlying philosophical truths—that is, in order to discover their hidden λόγοι.⁶ By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the emphasis of scholarship on Platonic myth came to focus generally on its more 'rational' aspects: their structure, and their reliance on and adaptation of traditional myths.⁷ In the late nineteenth century, scholars were coming to see Plato's myths as an integral part of the structure of Platonic dialogues, helping to bridge the gap between "the domain of opinion and the domain of philosophy,"⁸ but it was not until Stewart's (1906) *The Myths of Plato* that myth came to be seen

⁴ Cf. Morgan 2000, 31 and Wians 2009, 3.

⁵ Edelstein 1949, 463.

⁶ Edelstein 1949, 464.

⁷ Moors 1982, 3-5.

⁸ Moors 1982, 6.

as possibly philosophic, an idea furthered by Frutiger and Friedländer.⁹ The insight that Plato's myths could be regarded as philosophic and not merely poetic made space for Edelstein to argue in 1949 that Plato's eschatological myths in particular were constructed in a rational way and had ethical implications, and for Pieper to argue in 1962 and 1965 that Plato's myths could even be called 'true.' Still, it wasn't until the mid- and late twentieth century that scholars began to reject the opposition between, and the supposed historical shift from, μῦθος to λόγος.

As many recent scholars have pointed out,¹⁰ there are both myriad elements of the mythological in early philosophy, and myriad elements of the rational in early mythology.¹¹ Playwrights of Classical Athens seemed to have a similar understanding: they composed plays based on traditional myths not because they had not noticed that it was then λόγος, not μῦθος, that was intellectually en vogue, but because they, like some early philosophers, understood that μῦθοι are effective at eliciting certain intellectual and emotional reactions in their audiences.¹² It seems more accurate, then, to say not that λόγος replaced μῦθος in the Greek intellectual arena, but rather that μῦθος came to hold a different function between the fourth and sixth centuries: the use of myth expanded from its former role as a tool for explaining the world and the role of humanity in it to include an intentional, rhetorical, persuasive use in philosophical, tragic, and other contexts. As Morgan (2000) puts it, "while some early philosophers were eager to condemn and displace their poetic predecessors, they were by no means averse to employing myth themselves. What distinguishes them is that their use of myth is self-conscious and designed to raise second-order

⁹ Moors 1982, 6-9.

¹⁰ See esp. Morgan 2000, 30-7; Partenie's 2009 Introduction to *Plato's Myths*; Wians' 2009 Introduction to *Logos and Muthos*; and Collobert et al.'s 2012 Introduction to *Plato and Myth*.

¹¹ In defense of Nestle, he did note the latter point (24-48).

¹² Cf. Wians 2009: "The continued deployment of myth by the poets was a decision arrived at rationally, not an unreflective perpetuation of a primitive mentality" (4).

questions about the use of language” (35).¹³ Indeed, many of the ancient critiques of μῦθος are now understood to be attacking not so much μῦθος itself, but an unreflective or inappropriate use of μῦθος in particular.¹⁴

The idea that μῦθος and λόγος were opposed to each other, and that Greek thought shifted its focus from one to the other, was a prevailing viewpoint even as recently as fifty years ago, and so has had a great influence on scholarship about ancient myths, and about Plato’s use of myth in particular. Because the terms “μῦθος” and “λόγος” cover what seems to be a wide range of discourses,¹⁵ many scholars of the last century came to define and characterize them in opposition to one another. Morgan sums up the view of Nestle and others nicely: “*Mythos* is symbolic and pictorial, characterized by a lack of scrutiny, totally non-rational, while *logos*, of course, embodies the opposite qualities” (31). The supposed “lack of scrutiny” and “non-rationality” of μῦθος led scholars to widely believe it was also non-argumentative and non-falsifiable discourse, meaning that μῦθοι were incapable of making an argument, and incapable of being shown to be true or false, respectively.¹⁶ Thus μῦθος was viewed as a discourse far less appropriate to philosophy than λόγος, so the mythological elements in Plato and other authors were relegated to the status of ‘holdovers’ from the old way of thinking, or (merely) rhetorical appeals, or simply flowery ways of repeating what had already been established through λόγος.¹⁷

¹³ Collobert et al. (2012) hold a similar view, expressed in the Introduction to their edited volume: “Not only did Plato write dialogues, but he also created myths whose ambiguous epistemological status reflects the ambiguity of the relation between philosophy and literature itself” (1). Cf. Brill 2011, 92.

¹⁴ Lloyd 1990, 44-6; Wians 2009, 3; Buxton 1999, 5.

¹⁵ A particularly cogent characterization of Plato’s use of μῦθος is given by Partenie 2009 (1-6). The most thorough is Moors’ 1982 catalogue.

¹⁶ Although current scholarship has, over the last twenty to thirty years, mostly abandoned the idea that Plato’s myths are non-rational, many still maintain that his myths are non-argumentative (e.g., Partenie 2009; Brisson 1994 [1998], 2012). This particular point is discussed at length in section 1.1.5 of this Chapter.

¹⁷ An interesting exception to this view is given in Stewart’s (1905) *The Myths of Plato*, which argues that myths and other poetry are aimed to produce a “Transcendental Feeling,” because they “appeal to that major part of man’s nature which is not articulate and logical, but feels, and wills, and acts...and expresses itself, not scientifically...but practically in ‘value-judgments’—or rather ‘value-feelings’” (44, cf. 45-64).

Now, however, that the supposed progression “‘from *muthos* to *logos*’ has itself been revealed to be a myth,”¹⁸ scholars have in general become much more amenable to viewing μῦθος in ways that do not oppose it to λόγος. These two forms of discourse are now thought to be, under various views, “complementary”¹⁹ and simultaneously intrinsic to ancient philosophy.²⁰ Collobert et al. (2012) claim that in the Platonic corpus in particular, “myth in its relation to *logos*, defined as reasoned discourse, appears at once both same and other... Plato blurs the boundaries and the difference becomes less pronounced: myth becomes an integral and constitutive part of philosophical discourse” (1). Modern scholars now generally find Platonic myth to be not only persuasive,²¹ but also didactic²² precisely because it is philosophical.²³ The idea that myth is non-rational has been rather well challenged,²⁴ making way for scholars like Rowe (2009, 2012) and myself to envisage myth as not only rational, but evaluable as true or false discourse and even as argumentative discourse.

The rest of this Chapter provides a more in-depth and nuanced discussion of some of the major topics in the current literature on Platonic myth and argument. After giving a preliminary characterization of myth in Plato, in order to define the scope and limits of the current study (1.1.2), I discuss various approaches to viewing myth as verifiable (otherwise known as “falsifiable,” 1.1.3), as truth-evaluable (1.1.4), and as argumentative (1.1.5). Section 2 of this Chapter reviews current thinking on the argumentative structure of *Phaedo*, including the delineation of the

¹⁸ Wians 2009, 3. For a lively and in-depth argument that scholarship has most recently rejected this dichotomy too much, Fowler’s (2011) *Mythos and Logos* is helpful.

¹⁹ Mattéi 1988, 68.

²⁰ Morgan 2000, 272-4.

²¹ E.g., Partenie 2009, 6-8; Edelstein 1949, 466, 468.

²² E.g., Edelstein 1949, 465; Smith 1982; Partenie 2009, 8-11; Tecusan 1992, 69; Rowe 1999, 278 n. 37; Fowler 2011, 64.

²³ E.g., Annas 1982; Sedley 1990, 381; Rowe 1999, 265; Partenie 2009, 19.

²⁴ E.g., Rowe 2009.

arguments (1.2.1), issues raised by the arguments (1.2.2), and the relationship between the arguments and the myth (1.2.3).

1.1.2 Types of Myth in Plato

Although the focus of this dissertation is the role of the myth in *Phaedo* in particular, I begin here with a broader discussion of various interpretations of myth throughout the Platonic corpus. This will not only give some context for the ensuing interpretation of *Phaedo*, but also help to show more precisely how my interpretation has implications for other dialogues.

It may be helpful to clarify from the outset that what I will refer to as “myth” does not have complete correspondence with what Plato refers to as a “μῦθος.” Some of what modern scholars fairly unanimously refer to as “myths” are never called “μῦθος” by Socrates. In addition, Plato seems to intentionally confound whatever distinctions we might be tempted to make between μῦθος and λόγος by, for instance, combining the concepts into a single verb,²⁵ or having Socrates say in *Gorgias* that his account of the fate of the soul is meant as a λόγος even though it will be thought a μῦθος.²⁶ And since Plato neither defines “μῦθος” himself nor has any of his characters do so, we are left to either understand as myths only those things which one of Plato’s characters explicitly calls such,²⁷ or, what is the prevailing method,²⁸ to understand that what is generally

²⁵ Most 2012 elaborates: “A number of invented compound words, without which we ourselves can no longer even imagine conceptualizing the problem, are attested for the first time in Plato’s works, and indeed were most likely coined by him: *muthologia* appears eight times in his writings, *muthologēma* twice, *muthologikos* once, *muthologeō* as many as seventeen times” (13).

²⁶ Morgan 2000 believes this intentional confusing of the terms is intended to make Plato’s readers perform their own philosophical investigations: “When we ask what is and is not a myth, and ponder the criteria by which we would answer the question, we are engaging in philosophy. ...[W]hen referring to such narratives, Plato often underlines issues of truth status” (157).

²⁷ An approach, popularized by Couturat in 1896, that was suggested as late as 1981 by Zaslavsky (12).

²⁸ Brill 2011 explains the motivation for this: “if we discern the influence of myth broadly to include not only those passages explicitly called a μῦθος, but also the use of mythic imagery, we find the dialogues so permeated by mythic

taken to be a myth and what Plato labels a “μῦθος” lack one-to-one correspondence. Setting aside traditional myths²⁹—those that Plato reports in some form but originated elsewhere—there are two characteristics generally thought to characterize the myths of Plato’s own invention: (1) the subject-matter of Platonic myth is generally metaphysical, regarding the gods, the nature of the soul, the origin of the universe, or the like; and (2) these myths describe these things in nonliteral or not entirely literal ways. Within this last characteristic we might note also that Plato’s myths provide an *image* or *likeness* of what they are representing.³⁰

At times, Plato depicts traditional myth in unfavorable ways. For instance, in *Republic*, Socrates rejects many of the myths of Homer and Hesiod (377 ff.), and in *Phaedrus*, he is uninterested in examining the myth of Boreas abducting Orethua because he would rather spend his time inquiring into himself (229c ff.). At other times, however, Socrates references traditional myth with either outright or implied approbation, such as the myths of Eros’ birth (*Symposium* 201d ff.), of Gyges’ ring (*Republic* 359a ff.), and of Boreas (*Phaedrus* 229b ff.). One difference between these traditional myths and those invented by Plato,³¹ then, is that Socrates’ approval of traditional myth may differ depending on the context, yet the myths of Plato’s own invention are generally not disparaged by Plato’s characters. But even this division doesn’t seem to fully accommodate the range of Platonic myth, which is why many scholars tend to further subdivide

content as to place scholarly consternation about the significance of myth for philosophy already at some remove from Plato’s work” (86). Cf. Morgan 2000, 30-7.

²⁹ Plato’s incorporation and adaptation of traditional myths is both outside the scope of the current study, and already well-documented by previous scholars. See esp. Moors 1982.

³⁰ Among these images or likenesses are the image of the soul as a charioteer and two horses in *Phaedrus*, the image of the colorful earth and geography of the underworld in *Phaedo*. Many scholars agree that a defining characteristic of myth, as distinguished from allegory in particular, is that myths provide an image or story (e.g., Werner 2012, 30-35; Morgan 2000, 237; Brill 2011, 86; cp. Rowe 2000, 135).

³¹ Even this distinction can be difficult to make. The extant evidence in some cases may not be enough for us to make a determination, and in addition, some of the myths in the Platonic corpus may have been adapted by Plato in such ways as to make distinguishing between ‘his’ myths and ‘traditional’ myths a matter of interpretation.

the myths of Plato's own invention. Morgan, for instance, distinguishes between "educational myths that are intended to exercise social control [like the Myth of the Metals in *Republic*], and philosophical myths, which are tied to logical analysis" (162). Much attention has also been paid to what we might call Plato's 'historical' myths,³² those that describe a particular event, such as the myth in *Timaeus* that describes the creation of the universe or the myth in *Symposium* that describes Zeus splitting human beings in half.³³ These 'historical' myths are thought to differ from other types of myth because they describe an event that changed (or created) the world or humanity in some significant way; after the time such 'historical' myths take place (even though the time is unspecified), things are never the same again. Moors' catalogue of "μῦθος" and related terminology uses even more distinctions, finding eight different (though sometimes overlapping) categories including traditional myth, historical myth, philosophical myth, myth's relationship to education, and myth's relationship to poetry (59-66).³⁴ However, since the main focus of this study is only one of Plato's myths, a precise categorization of all of Plato's myths will be unnecessary here. Instead, I wish only to note that the myth of the *Phaedo* could be categorized as philosophical, a myth of the soul, an eschatological myth, and the like, but it is decidedly not traditional or historical.³⁵ Many of the characterizations and critiques that apply to other types of myth, which I discuss in the following sections (1.1.3-1.1.5), will thus not apply to the myth in *Phaedo*, nor to the other eschatological myths from *Phaedrus* and *Republic* that I discuss in Chapter 5.

³² Cf. Edelstein (1949) 469.

³³ *Timaeus* 27c ff.; *Symposium* 189 ff.

³⁴ Moors' categories are: Presented Myths (i.e., presented for philosophical consideration); Traditional Myths; Mytho-Historical Usages; Terms Associated with Lacadaemonians/Spartans; Myth as a Subject and Poetry; Myth as a Subject, Education, and the Young; Myth and Philosophic Subjects; and Myth and the Soul (1982, 59-66).

³⁵ Nor would it be an educational myth in Morgan's sense of the term (those "intended to exercise social control"), though it could certainly be considered educational in some other sense.

Many of the current controversies surrounding myths of Plato's own invention are those raised by Luc Brisson in his 1994 *Plato the Myth-Maker*, namely, whether myths can provide any form of knowledge or truth, and whether myth is even a type of discourse whose truth-value can be determined.³⁶ Since many scholars have adopted Brisson's stance that the unfalsifiability of myth requires it also to be nonargumentative, very few scholars have taken up the task of attempting to understand myth as argumentative.³⁷ It tends to be seen instead as something complementary to argumentative discourse.³⁸ In what follows I will begin to argue that even though discourse about the soul such as that in the *Phaedo* myth is beyond the realm of human knowledge,³⁹ it is still both truth-evaluable⁴⁰ and has the capacity to be argumentative.

1.1.3 Myth as Verifiable

Brisson looks to a passage from the *Sophist* (259d-264b) in which he claims that "Plato defines *logos* as 'verifiable discourse,'" and in so doing, Brisson argues, Plato also defines

³⁶ Discourse that has a truth-value is generally called "truth-evaluable"; discourse that does not is referred to as "non-truth-evaluable." This simply means that the statement, proposition, sentence, etc., can be rightly called "true" or "false." For the sake of brevity, I will use the terms "truth-evaluable" and "non-truth-evaluable" in what follows.

³⁷ One exception to this may be Burnyeat, although defending the thesis that myth can be an argument is not the focus of his study. See, in this Chapter, Section 1.1.5: Myth as Argument, and the accompanying footnotes.

³⁸ See section 1.1.5.

³⁹ There is some question as to whether Socrates believes that this is beyond the realm of human knowledge. He often speaks as though humans can know (and "prove" to one another) that the soul is immortal, but any further claims about what the soul experiences after death cannot be known. This is discussed at length in section 3.2.

⁴⁰ By "truth-evaluable," I mean only that the proposition 'the soul is immortal' is either true or false. The fact of the matter—whether the soul is indeed immortal or not—is in no way affected by our inability to know the fact. See Section 1.1.4 of this chapter.

“unverifiable discourse.”⁴¹ Verifiable discourse,⁴² Brisson claims, is discourse whose referent can be shown to correspond (or not) with facts either present in the sensible world or about the world of Forms; in other words, its referent “is accessible either to the intellect or to the senses” (24). For instance, the proposition that “Plato is currently writing a dialogue” can be verified (or not) by looking to whether he is currently writing a dialogue or currently dining with friends, while the proposition that “virtue is good” can be verified (or not) through an intellectual investigation into whether virtue belongs among good things. However, Brisson argues that the language of myth speaks neither of the sensible world nor of the world of Forms, since its referents are “gods, daemons, heroes, ...an immortal part of the human soul,” or “facts dating back to a very distant past” that would once have been but are no longer verifiable (24). Thus, Brisson concludes that “myth is unverifiable discourse because its referent is located either at a level of reality inaccessible both to the intellect and to the senses [i.e., when the subject of the myth is the soul], or at the level of sensible things, but in a past of which the speaker of the discourse can have no direct or indirect experience [i.e., when the subject of the myth is the origins of the universe].”⁴³

Because myth is beyond verifiability, Brisson claims, “myth should be situated beyond truth and falsehood; yet this does not seem to be the case since Plato presents myth at times as a false discourse and at times as a true one” (24). Thus the method of assessing the “adequacy” of a myth (20), says Brisson, requires “a change in perspective”:

Truth and error no longer depend on the correspondence of a discourse with its supposed referent but on the correspondence of a discourse, in this case myth, with

⁴¹ This quotation is from Brisson’s 1996 (published in English in 2004) *How Philosophers Saved Myths* (20). This text contains a revised version of the argument presented in his 1994 (published in English in 1998) *Plato the Myth-Maker*. I refer to the revised version of the essay (1996 [2004]) in what follows unless otherwise noted.

⁴² In his earlier articulation of the same argument (see previous fn. 41), Brisson uses the term “falsifiable” in the same way he uses “verifiable” in his later version. It is unclear whether, in shifting his language to that of “verifiability,” Brisson wished to separate this concept from the concept of “falsifiability” used in philosophy of science, as popularized by Karl Popper.

⁴³ Brisson 2004 (1996), 23; cf. Brisson 2012, 375.

another discourse that can be held up as [a] norm. ...The truth of a myth thus depends, in the final analysis, on its conformity with the philosopher's discourse on the intelligible forms in which the individual entities that are the subjects of this myth participate. (25)

According to Brisson, myths cannot be said to be “true” or “false” in themselves, but only in relation to rational discourse on the Forms, or “the discourse which proposes an explanatory model in the realm of cosmology.”⁴⁴ And this is because their subject-matter—either non-sensible entities like gods and the soul or sensible matters from the distant past—cannot be perceived with either the intellect or the senses.

Brisson is by no means alone in this concern, as many scholars have pointed out that the topics of many of Plato's myths are unverifiable.⁴⁵ But even this claim requires a bit of unpacking. Brisson's argument seems to rest on the idea that myth is unverifiable because of its subject-matter (what he calls its ‘referents’). Because these subjects or referents cannot be perceived by the intellect or by the senses, there is no way for a human being to access knowledge of them. Still, Brisson maintains, myths can be evaluated by their conformity with rational discourse on the Forms—and it is difficult to see how any rational discourse about the Forms would hold bearing for any mythological discourse unless the subject-matter of the two were the same or at least

⁴⁴ Brisson (1998 [1994]), 110. For examples of this, Brisson cites four myths: Atreus and Thyestes, the age of Kronos, and the earthborn race—all from *Statesman*—and the myth of Phaethon in *Timaeus*. The myths of *Statesman* are “all presented as resulting from the same phenomenon,” so Brisson covers all three with one quotation from the Stranger:

All these facts originate from the same event in cosmic history... However, as this great event took place so long ago, some of them have faded from man's memory; others survive but they have become scattered and have come to be told in a way which obscures their real connection with one another. (*Pol.* 269b5-c3).

Brisson then swiftly concludes only that “this cosmological phenomenon is explained by reference to a mechanical model” (1998 [1994]), 110. And for the Phaethon passage from *Timaeus*, Brisson translates Solon's explanation: “...Now this [story of Phaethon] has the form of a myth, but really signifies a parallax of the bodies moving in the heavens around the earth...” (*Tim.* 22c3-d3). It is notable that Brisson's examples here are not myths of Plato's own invention, and also that they both concern cosmology rather than the Forms. One is left questioning whether Brisson's conclusions hold regarding myths about the Forms or eschatological myths—and I argue throughout this and the following sections that they do not.

⁴⁵ E.g., Burnyeat (2009) 177, Most (2012) 17, Collobert et al. (2012) 1.

related. A return to the division of topics of myths, which I referenced in the previous section, is thus required. When it comes to historical myths, those that are said to have taken place in the distant past, it seems clear that Brisson's argument is correct: there can be no form of verification of such myths. Similarly, when it comes to gods, daemons, and heroes,⁴⁶ these are topics outside of the realm of human knowledge. However, there does *not* seem to be as clear a reason for making the same claim about the Forms or about the immortal soul. Certainly, whatever the immortal soul might experience while not in a human body would be outside the realm of human experience—by definition. But this does not necessarily mean that the mere fact *that the soul is immortal* would be outside the realm of human knowledge, at least for Socrates, because the immortality of the soul may be accessible to the intellect in the same way that knowledge of the Forms is.

Even if such knowledge is not attainable, a new issue arises to challenge Brisson's argument: if knowledge that the soul is immortal is not attainable, then how could any discourse about the immortality of the soul produce such knowledge? It would seem that if a myth about the immortality of the soul is unverifiable discourse, then a propositional argument about the immortality of the soul will also be unverifiable discourse. For the moment, we can remain agnostic as to which of these perspectives it will be best to adopt. I will argue throughout this dissertation that Plato believes that knowledge of the mere fact that the soul is immortal is accessible to human beings,⁴⁷ even though knowledge of the *experiences* of a discarnate soul is

⁴⁶ Here Brisson makes clear that although he himself is referring to these entities by classification for the ease of understanding, each of Plato's references are to "proper names... Hence they do not refer to concepts ('gods, heroes, etc.') but to individuals ('Zeus, Oedipus, etc.')" (22).

⁴⁷ This is suggested not only in *Phaedo*, when Socrates claims to have "proven" the immortality of the soul in both the Cyclical/Recollection Argument and the Final Argument (77c6-7, 77d5), but also in *Phaedrus*, where Socrates gives a "proof" (ἀπόδειξις) of the immortality of the soul (245c5-246a2). Presumably, if the immortality of the soul can be proven by a human being, it can also be known by a human being.

not accessible to human beings.⁴⁸ For now, however, I wish only to point out that if what makes discourse on a topic unverifiable is its subject-matter's relationship to human cognitive ability, then we must understand that any discourse on a given topic, whether in mythological or propositional language, will have the same verifiable or unverifiable status.⁴⁹

1.1.4 Myth as Truth-Evaluable

Regardless of whether Plato believes that the soul's immortality is within the realm of knowledge available to human beings, there must still be a fact about the matter: the soul either is immortal, or it is not. And the fact that the soul is immortal—or, perhaps, the fact that the soul is not immortal—is in no way affected by the human cognitive ability to apprehend it—or not. This is the distinction that I believe Brisson and others have overlooked: 'the soul is immortal' is not a *verifiable* proposition because human beings cannot verify it; however 'the soul is immortal' is a *truth-evaluable* proposition because there is a true fact of the matter, even though human beings cannot know the fact. Brisson's argument that myth is unverifiable is an *epistemological* one, wholly separate from the *ontological* fact of the soul's immortality. It is thus critical to note that even if we believe the proposition 'the soul is immortal' to be unverifiable—and again, it is not clear that *Socrates* believes it to be unverifiable—there is still a fact that determines the truth or

⁴⁸ This assertion may not be as opposed to Brisson's argument as it may seem, although he is silent on the subject. His claim that "there cannot be a definitive description of the soul in all its immortality" (24) may leave open the possibility that he thinks there can be a definitive description of the soul—full stop—which would include at least the mere fact of its immortality.

⁴⁹ Because this principle holds for all types of discourse, it holds for all types of myth. 'Historical' and 'traditional' myths will be verifiable or unverifiable based on their subject-matter, not based on their mythological language.

falsity of this proposition. And the existence of that fact makes the proposition ‘the soul is immortal’ truth-evaluable.⁵⁰

There are many instances in which Socrates claims that his myths are true,⁵¹ and scholars have gone to great lengths in order to understand what Socrates means by such claims. Scholars like Smith are willing to accept Socrates’ characterization of some myths as ‘true,’ arguing that by this, Socrates means that a good myth-maker makes his myths “as closely in accord with the truth as possible.”⁵² Trabattoni makes an even stronger claim, since he believes that Socrates uses myth to express what might not be able to be expressed in literal, propositional language: “If ‘telling the truth’ means, as in the abovementioned passage ([*Phdr.*] 247c), ‘speaking about truth’, i.e., somehow describing the world above us, and whose realities are true, then the hierarchy between myth and *logos* must be reversed, and this time the myth is set to gain the upper hand” (312-3). Others such as Burnyeat think the question of whether such myths are true is somewhat nonsensical, claiming that we are “able to judge (*krinai*) not whether what the speaker says is *true*, but whether they are using the appropriate methods of inquiry and giving the right *sorts* of explanation” (177, ital. in original). Burnyeat takes a view closer to Brisson’s, on which the only way to understand Plato’s myths as being true is to understand the word “true” to have some sort of alternate meaning.

These authors have articulated some limitations of many types of Plato’s myths: when confronted with a historical myth, we can judge it only by whether it seems to ‘accord with the

⁵⁰ The concept of truth-evaluability is generally taken to rely on the idea of a hypothetical ‘perfect knower’ or something similar. Humanity has never seen a perfect knower, so the concept of truth-evaluability is in no way tied up with human cognitive ability. An omniscient god, for instance, would be a perfect knower, and so would be able to determine the truth or falsity of the proposition ‘the soul is immortal.’

⁵¹ E.g., *Gorgias* 523a, 524a-b; *Phaedrus* 245c, 247c.

⁵² 1986, 33.

truth as much as possible,’ and when confronted with discourse about what is beyond the realm of human knowledge, we can judge it only by the appropriateness of its methods and explanations. However, the question remains as to whether the immortality of the soul falls into the latter category for Plato. In Chapter 2, I will argue that the immortality of the soul is not beyond the realm of human knowledge for Plato, even though the details about what the soul experiences after death are. Any discourse about the experiences of the discarnate soul, then, cannot be expected to be accompanied by complete certainty. Such discourse can, however, as Brisson and Burnyeat suggest, be subject to some kind of evaluation based on whether it gives “the right *sorts* of explanation” (Burnyeat), and on whether it is in “conformity with the philosopher’s discourse on the intelligible forms” (Brisson 1996 [2004], 25). I would like to note once again that Brisson and Burnyeat’s explanations for what kinds of truth can be found in myth would apply equally to any other type of discourse on an unknowable topic.⁵³ However, they have also pointed to a way that the subject-matter of some myths might be found to be knowable and therefore verifiable. If a myth about the soul is supported by “the philosopher’s discourse on the intelligible forms”—that is, on what Socrates calls in *Phaedo* the surest and highest principles⁵⁴—then there will be a method for evaluating the truth of the myth even for those who do not accept the myth as true by itself. The intellectual support provided by knowledge of the Forms is a firm enough foundation for declaring a myth to be ‘true,’ even for those who think that the truth of a myth cannot be evaluated in a more traditional manner.

While those like Brisson and Burnyeat hesitate to say myths have a truth-value because of their subject-matters, others hesitate because they view myth as non-literal discourse, and they

⁵³ They would also hold for other types of myth, such as ‘historial’ or ‘traditional’ myths.

⁵⁴ I discuss this at length in Chapters 2.3 and 3.2.

believe it is difficult or impossible to classify non-literal discourse as true or false. Two points of interpretation motivate this concern: the claim that myth is indeed allegorical or at least non-literal, and the claim that non-literal language lacks a truth-value. As to the first of these, many scholars reject the idea that Plato intends his myths to be taken allegorically,⁵⁵ and Plato himself gives us good reason to think this in both *Phaedrus* and *Republic*. When Phaedrus asks Socrates whether he has been persuaded that the Boreas myth is true (σὺ τοῦτο τὸ μυθολόγημα πείθῃ ἀληθὲς εἶναι; 229c5)—that is, whether the traditional myth can be taken at its word—Socrates replies that it would be a waste of time to *disbelieve* the traditional myth (ἀπιστέω, 229c6) and to look for an allegorical explanation, because he would need to do so for everything else: “if someone, disbelieving these things, brings each nearer to what is likely, as if consulting some rustic wisdom, there will be need for him to have a lot of leisure” (αἷς εἴ τις ἀπιστῶν προσβιβᾷ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἕκαστον, ἅτε ἀγροίκῳ τινὶ σοφία χρώμενος, πολλῆς αὐτῷ σχολῆς δεήσει, 229e2-4).⁵⁶ Instead, he thinks it best to be persuaded by the traditional, literal interpretation (πειθόμενος δὲ τῷ νομιζομένῳ περὶ αὐτῶν, 230a2) and to instead look into his own nature (σκοπῶ οὐ ταῦτα ἀλλ’ ἐμαυτόν, 230a3). Here Socrates seems to indicate that it is a waste of time to seek allegorical interpretations of traditional myths, at least until we know ourselves (where ‘knowing oneself’ must mean something like knowing one’s own nature as a soul that happens to currently be embodied). Since Socrates believes we should not look for allegorical interpretations of myths that he will *not* call true, there is even less reason for thinking we should look for allegorical interpretations of myths that Socrates claims *are* true. Socrates takes a similar attitude toward traditional myths in *Republic*, where he

⁵⁵ E.g., Edelstein (1949) 481, Pieper (2011 [1965]), Stewart (1960), Naddaf (2009), Dixsaut (2012).

⁵⁶ Cf. 229d: “I believe such [allegorical interpretations] are neat in other ways, but they are for a man [who is] overly clever and toilsome and not entirely fortunate” (ἐγὼ δὲ ... ἄλλως μὲν τὰ τοιαῦτα χαρίεντα ἡγοῦμαι, λίαν δὲ δεινοῦ καὶ ἐπιπόνου καὶ οὐ πάνυ εὐτυχοῦς ἀνδρός, *Phdr.* 229d2-4)

rejects many traditional myths because they tell lies about the gods and heroic men. Here again we see Socrates taking a literal interpretation of myth, and in so doing, rejecting any non-literal interpretations that might make these myths seem allegorical instead of blasphemous.⁵⁷

Despite these instances where Socrates rejects allegorical interpretations of traditional myths, we might still think he would allow for allegorical interpretations of the myths he creates himself. But this depends entirely on what we take ‘allegorical’ to mean. It may be of note that there are many passages in Plato that are widely accepted by today’s scholars as ‘myths,’ and only one passage that is widely accepted as an ‘allegory’: the so-called Allegory of the Cave at *Republic* 514a-18b. In this passage, Socrates describes human beings at various stages of developing the ability to gaze at the sun, which he explicitly explains is an allegory for the average human being’s lack of ability to contemplate and apprehend the truth. Plato, however, does not refer to this image of people in a cave as an “ἀλληγορία,” nor does he use the term anywhere else in the Platonic corpus,⁵⁸ so we might wonder what features this ‘allegory’ has that make us want to distinguish it from Plato’s myths. The general consensus among today’s scholars is that the meaning of an allegory is not conveyed literally, but must be interpreted as having a referent that is not directly stated. As G. Naddaf explains, “to compose allegorically is to construct a work so that its apparent sense refers to an ‘other’ sense. To interpret allegorically...is to explain a work as if there is an

⁵⁷ Another concern for Socrates in this discussion, of course, is that such stories set a poor example for young or uneducated people: “For this reason one must stop such myths, lest they produce a great proneness toward vice in our youths” (ἐνεκα πανστέον τοὺς τοιούτους μύθους, μὴ ἡμῖν πολλὴν εὐχέρειαν ἐντίκτωσι τοῖς νέοις πονηρίας, *Rep.* 391e12-92a1). This is in part because young people are impressionable and not yet able to determine whether a myth might be better interpreted in a non-literal way: “a young person is not able to judge that [a myth has] a deeper meaning or not” (ὁ γὰρ νέος οὐχ οἷός τε κρίνειν ὅτι τε ὑπόνοια καὶ ὁ μῆ, 378d7-8). However, the overriding concern at this moment seems to be that the citizens of the Kallipolis do not wind up with a “true lie” (ἀληθὺς ψεῦδος, 382a) in their soul—the type of lie that gives one a fundamental misconception about what truly is, rather than the type that, e.g., leads them to believe their people are autochthonous—which a young person would wind up with if they are taught to believe that the best beings are not virtuous.

⁵⁸ Brandwood’s *A Word Index to Plato* (1976) confirms this.

‘other’ sense to it.”⁵⁹ An allegory, then, displays a mis-match between its literal wording and the meaning it is intended to convey; what it means is something other than what it says. A myth, on the other hand, may not be literally true, particularly in its details, but its meaning is conveyed in what it says: “the strictly mythical story...does not refer to anything else; it concerns itself exclusively with something expressed directly in the story itself—no matter how unattainable and unfathomable this may be for human reason.”⁶⁰ Myth says what it means; allegory means something else in what it says. So to take an allegorical interpretation of a myth by searching for meaning outside of what the myth actually says would be to misunderstand the meaning of the myth.

This is not to say that every single detail of a myth should be taken literally, and Socrates cautions us against doing so just after telling the *Phaedo* myth. Socrates’ myth begins with an explanation of the shape, regions, and characteristics of the earth, including the geography of Hades, with its various lakes, rivers, and plains. The latter part of the myth explains how the souls of those who have died are judged and travel to various places in Hades to receive punishments and purifications in preparation for their next reincarnation. After explaining all this in a rather detailed way, Socrates concludes:

To affirm these things confidently in exactly the way I have explained is not proper to a man having reason; but indeed [to affirm] these things or such things about our souls... seems proper to me.
 τὸ μὲν οὖν ταῦτα δισχυρίσασθαι οὕτως ἔχειν ὡς ἐγὼ διελέλυθα, οὐ πρέπει νοῦν ἔχοντι ἀνδρί: ὅτι μέντοι ἢ ταῦτ’ ἐστὶν ἢ τοιαῦτ’ ἅττα περὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν... τοῦτο καὶ πρέπει μοι δοκεῖ. (114d1-3, 4-5)

A full analysis of this passage and its implications will be given in section 3.1.5, so for now, some preliminary remarks must suffice. Socrates says here that he cannot affirm that what he has said in

⁵⁹ 111.

⁶⁰ Pieper 2011 [1965], 15

the myth is exactly correct; still, something along the lines of what he has said—"these things or such things"—is proper to believe. The implication is that Socrates will not affirm the details of the myth, such as the exact geography of Hades or the exact amount of time a soul might spend being purified, but that in broad strokes, what Socrates has said is true. Socrates is confident that, if nothing else, vicious or slightly corrupted souls are treated differently than pure, philosophical souls, and that pure, philosophical souls have a chance at a blessed existence full of communion with the gods, contemplation, and knowledge. In essence, the truth of the myth lies not in its details but in its underlying structure.⁶¹ It doesn't matter whether the myth gets the geography of Hades correct as long as it conveys the point that different souls fare different fates in Hades. The myth is still not meant to be understood allegorically, because its literal subject-matter—the fate of the soul after death—is also its true subject-matter. However, some interpretation is required because Socrates is attempting to describe in material terms what an immaterial soul experiences.

While allegorical or non-literal statements such as myth are not truth-evaluable in exactly the same way as literal statements, non-literal discourse can still make true or false claims by providing an accurate (or not) comparison, allegory, image, etc. of its subject-matter.⁶² This is easiest to see in terms of a basic metaphor: 'the heart is a pump' is true in a way that 'the heart is a hammer' is not. Similarly, a myth can be a true likeness of its subject-matter, or it can be a false (inaccurate) likeness.⁶³ For instance, in *Republic*, Socrates condemns many traditional myths as

⁶¹ I will argue in sections 2.4 and 3.1.5 that the details of the myth are not essential to the myth in the sense that they could be replaced by different details without changing the truth-value or the underlying structure of the myth. Still, some details—even if they are interchangeable with other details—are necessary in order for the myth to keep its mythological character, as I argue in sections 4.4 and 5.1.

⁶² Cf. Smith 1985; Burnyeat 2009; Fowler 2011; Collobert et al. 2012; Trabattoni 2012.

⁶³ Even Brisson seems open to this idea: if, as he says, "false discourse gives an unfaithful image of the reality which it claims to depict," then, presumably, true discourse gives a faithful image (2004 [1996] 21). Cf. Gottfried (1993): "myths, like the objects of sense perceptions, can be either more or less accurate copies of the divine truth which they imitate" (195).

false stories (μῦθοι ψευδεῖς), by which he means “whenever someone makes an image badly in speech of what is—what sorts of things gods and heroes are—just as if a painter painted likenesses not at all like the things he wished to paint” (ὅταν εἰκάζῃ τις κακῶς οὐσίαν τῷ λόγῳ, περὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἡρώων οἱοί εἰσιν, ὥσπερ γραφεὺς μηδὲν εἰκότα γράφων οἷς ἂν ὅμοια βουληθῇ γράψαι, 377e1-3). And in *Phaedrus*, Socrates indicates that giving an image of what something is *like* is a form of explanation particularly appropriate for human beings—that is, for those of us whose cognitive abilities are limited by our human capacities:

About its deathlessness, enough; regarding the form of [the soul] it is to be said in this way: what sort of thing it is would be entirely and in every way divine and a long exposition, but [to say] to what it is like [would be] within human capability and shorter. Let us then speak in this way. Let it be like the combined power of a charioteer and yoke of winged horses.

περὶ μὲν οὖν ἀθανασίας αὐτῆς ἱκανῶς: περὶ δὲ τῆς ιδέας αὐτῆς ὥδε λεκτέον. οἷον μὲν ἐστὶ, πάντῃ πάντως θείας εἶναι καὶ μακρᾷς διηγήσεως, ὃ δὲ ἔοικεν,⁶⁴ ἀνθρωπίνης τε καὶ ἐλάττονος: ταύτῃ οὖν λέγωμεν. εἰκέτω δὴ συμφύτῳ δυνάμει ὑποπτέρου ζεύγους τε καὶ ἡνιόχου. (246a3-7)

Discourse that gives an image of its subject-matter, whether an accurate or inaccurate image, does seem to be truth-evaluable, both in contemporary thought and for Socrates. And if such discourse gives an accurate image, the discourse can be said to be true, even if it is non-literal discourse. As Collobert et al. write, “myth possesses a truth content that makes it an object of interpretation.”⁶⁵ And considering that Socrates sometimes says either that his myths are true or that he believes

⁶⁴ Many readers will immediately think of the εἰκὼς μῦθος and εἰκὼς λόγος of *Timaeus*. While the εἰκὼς of the *Timaeus* and the εἶκος used here are linguistically connected—εἰκὼς being a participial form of εἶκος—we do not necessarily have reason to import the complications of *Timaeus* into this passage. The distinction (or connection) Socrates draws here is not between μῦθος and λόγος, nor between what is (merely) likely and what can be proven, but between ways of attempting to speak about the soul. Socrates does not think he can describe the Form of the Soul, but he does believe he can say “to what it is like,” i.e., he can give a likeness of the soul in an image. See Burnyeat (2009) for a particularly comprehensive discussion of how to interpret εἰκὼς in *Timaeus*.

⁶⁵ (1).

them to be true,⁶⁶ there seem to be many good reasons to understand his mythological discourse as truth-evaluable.

1.1.5 Myth as Argument

Returning to the characterization of myth popularized by Brisson, we should note that his argument overlooks the idea that myth can be truth-evaluable even if it is not verifiable. He instead moves directly from the claim that myth is unverifiable to the claim that myth is therefore “non[-]argumentative discourse” (2004 [1996], 25). He takes myth to be “a narrative” (or “narrative discourse”), as opposed to “argumentative discourse,” that “relates events as they are supposed to have happened,” and whose “sole aim, at least on the surface is to realize, through the intermediary of the story maker or teller an emotive fusion between the intended audience and the hero of the narrative” (2004 [1996], 25). While this characterization of myth as a plot-driven narrative seems to describe many of the traditional myths of Plato’s time, and even the ‘historical’ myths of Plato’s own invention such as that in *Timaeus*, it does not seem at all an apt description Socrates’ eschatological myths. Brisson notes specifically that this opposition between narrative and argument makes sense only in a “philosophical context,” yet it seems rather that in the context of Plato’s philosophy, this distinction breaks down quite quickly. Eschatological myths such as those in *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus* do not “relate events as they are supposed to have happened” or aim to create an “emotive fusion” between their hero and the audience. They are in some sense ‘timeless’

⁶⁶ E.g., *Gorgias* 523a, 524a-b; *Phaedrus* 245c, 247c.

myths, where the precise point of the myth is not that there is some one hero, but that *everyone* will be in the position of the soul described in the myth when the body dies. In fact, as I will argue in Chapter 2.4, Socrates' eschatological myths sound much more like a form of how Brisson characterizes argumentative discourse: discourse that "follows a rational order (regardless of how reason is defined)."⁶⁷ While it is true that Brisson also understands argumentative discourse to be "constructed on the model of mathematics, according to rules aiming to make the conclusion necessary," no form of discourse could meet such a requirement when its subject-matter is beyond the realm of human knowledge. This does not mean that myth cannot be argumentative, but rather that *no* form of discourse about the soul will have a necessary conclusion deduced with the rigor of mathematics. If the myth in *Phaedo*, for example, is inherently non-argumentative discourse, then so are the propositional arguments that precede it. But if the propositional arguments about the immortality of the soul can rightly be called 'arguments,' Brisson has yet to provide a reason for thinking the myth can't also be an argument.

Now, what can properly be called an 'argument' is largely field- and context-dependent. The types of premises and conclusions permitted in an ethical argument, for instance, will generally not be of the same sort that are permitted in mathematics, or in casual conversation with a friend. Regardless of context, however, there are two basic elements that characterize something as an argument: an assertion (or conclusion) and reasons for making that assertion (or premises).⁶⁸ I will take these to be the minimum requirements for an argument regardless of context, and will return to this characterization of an argument for further refinement in Section 1.1.3 below.

⁶⁷ Brisson (1996 [2004]) 25.

⁶⁸ McKeon 2019.

Many other scholars, following Brisson, have also argued that myth cannot be argumentative discourse. For instance, Morgan sees Plato's myths as based on *axiomata* that are provided in dialectical or rigorous philosophical inquiry, yet she thinks these myths are *complementary* to arguments rather than arguments in themselves.⁶⁹ She characterizes Plato's myths as "a kind of philosophical shorthand and the discourse which represents philosophy's culmination."⁷⁰ Similarly, Johnson sees the Myth of Er in particular as a *conclusion* to the argument of *Republic*, but not as an argument on its own. Rowe gives a bit more credit to Plato's myths because he thinks they re-state Socrates' dialectic arguments in rhetorically different ways. He believes that while a perfectly rational soul—not that there could be such a thing—might not need any rhetorical strategies to fully comprehend dialectical arguments, Plato's myths help our imperfect souls to understand them by presenting the same information in another way.⁷¹ While I believe these scholars are right to view Plato's myths as related to his dialectical arguments, I intend to show that the way they are related is by creating their own arguments based on hypotheses provided by propositional arguments.

Burnyeat alone seems to understand Plato's myths as discrete arguments, but this is not the focus of his study, so he does not give an explicit account of how to understand myth as argument. He calls myth an "argument" in passing, and he sometimes characterizes them as beginning from hypotheses.⁷² In addition, Burnyeat believes that Plato wanted myths to be judged in much the

⁶⁹ Morgan (2000) 208, 239, 204, 209.

⁷⁰ Morgan (2000) 185.

⁷¹ Rowe (2012) 144. Destrée (2012) has a similar view, that myths are "maybe primarily aimed at emotionally touching their audience, and therefore... primarily addressed to the irrational part of our soul. But contrary to most traditional interpretations that tend to oppose myths to arguments, I agree that myths are part and parcel of the whole argument that is also a sort of myth, because arguments are not intended solely for the sake of understanding" (111-2).

⁷² For his use of "argument," see 175. Characterizations of myths as beginning from hypotheses can be found at 175, 177-8, 181, and 185. Burnyeat characterizes Timaeus' *μῦθος* as "a *number* of statements standing to each other in some logical relation" that differs from necessary accounts in its "argumentative rigor" (176, ital. in original). Furthermore, Burnyeat claims that Timaeus' account "aims to be appropriately argued" (177).

same way that one would judge the validity of an argument, saying that he “want[s] to celebrate Plato’s insight that reasoning which lacks the rigor of mathematical proof or Parmenidean logic may nonetheless have standards of its own by which it can be judged to succeed or fail.”⁷³ A few scholars have also noted that, similar to basing an argument on a hypothesis, many of Plato’s *myths* are based on hypotheses that he has presented or argued for in propositional language such as dialectic (Morgan, Burnyeat, Trabattoni); however, these scholars tend to mention this fact only in passing, and have not sought to understand the full implications of this for the argumentative capacity of myths. Morgan, for instance, says that “Myth has ... an *association* with the hypotheses that must be subjected to rational inquiry at the beginning of the philosophical enterprise,” but she does not investigate this ‘association’ further (239, emphasis mine).⁷⁴ Trabattoni makes a similarly vague claim: “The truth of the myth *is linked to* the truth of the dialectic demonstration whence the myth draws its thrust, it being understood that this very truth is not completely beyond doubt” (321, emphasis mine). While these scholars seem to understand some of Plato’s myths as argumentative, none have yet to give an explicit account of how this is so and which myths might qualify. By examining the structure, demonstrative status, and persuasive function of Socrates’ myth in *Phaedo*, and through a brief comparison with other eschatological myths of his, I hope to make just such an account.

⁷³ Burnyeat (2009) 177.

⁷⁴ Morgan perhaps shows a willingness to conceive of the *Phaedo* myth as an argument when she writes, “This account [the *Phaedo* myth], then, is introduced by a conditional that marks it as a consequence of belief in immortality” (2000, 197).

1.2 Review of the Current Literature on Arguments in *Phaedo*

1.2.1 Delineation of the Arguments

When it comes to scholarly commentary on argumentation in the *Phaedo*, the vast majority of scholars are concerned only with the so-called Four Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul. These arguments are commonly delineated and titled in the following or in a similar fashion:⁷⁵

The Cyclical Argument (70c-72e): Argues that opposites come from opposites, thus there is a process of coming to be opposite. These processes must balance each other out, or else everything would be dead. Therefore, since dying and coming back to life are opposite processes, and not everything is dead, souls must come back to life.

The Argument from Recollection (72e-78b): Argues that because when we see examples of so-called equal things in the world, we recollect The Equal Itself (i.e., the Form of Equal), we must have prior knowledge of The Equal Itself—which, because we did not gain this knowledge during life in the sensible world, must have been learned by us before we were born (i.e., the soul must exist prior to its embodiment).

⁷⁵ I am here using the names and Stephanus numbers from a source widely available to even an inexpert audience, Connolly's article on *Phaedo* from the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. However, the same or quite similar names for these same arguments (with sometimes just slightly different Stephanus citations) can be found in, e.g., the commentaries of Bluck (1955), Hackforth (1955), Gallop (1975), Bostock (1986), and Rowe (1993), as well as in numerous articles on any of these arguments.

The Affinity Argument (78b-84b): Argues that there are two types of being: that of the Forms, and that of particulars in the sensible world. Because soul is more like the Forms in being invisible, non-composite, and always the same, it must also be like the Forms in being everlasting and deathless.

The Final Argument (102b-107b): Argues that something that has an innate feature will always flee or be destroyed when the opposite of its innate feature approaches. Because an innate feature of soul is life, and the opposite of life is death, soul must flee or be destroyed upon the approach of death. However, soul cannot admit of death without ceasing to be soul (since one of its innate features is life), and what cannot admit of death is indestructible, therefore soul must be indestructible.

Scholars are certainly not wrong to pick these four arguments out as the main arguments in *Phaedo*, nor are they wrong to say that these are all arguments for the immortality of the soul. However, as I will argue in Chapters 2 and 3, focusing on these arguments without also examining their relationship to the *other* arguments in the dialogue—those that do *not* argue for the immortality of the soul—does not allow one to fully understand the overall argumentative structure of the *Phaedo*. However, since this is the overwhelmingly prevailing approach to the argumentative structure of the dialogue,⁷⁶ my discussion throughout Chapter 1 will follow this lead, until I can explain in Chapter 2 why I believe a more nuanced view is required.

⁷⁶ Of course, commentators do not *entirely* ignore the sections of the dialogue beyond these four arguments for immortality. I mean only that when discussing “the arguments” of the dialogue, or when discussing its overall argumentative structure, what comes before and after these four arguments is largely ignored. For instance, the myth that follows the Final Argument is often discussed either on its own terms or in relation to the Final Argument alone, without reference to the earlier arguments (cite). In addition, there are two arguments that precede the four for

1.2.2 Issues Raised by The Arguments

One of the main foci of modern commentators is the validity of Socrates' arguments for immortality. This may well be because only one of the arguments in the dialogue, the Final Argument, is not refuted (or attempted to be refuted) by one or more of Socrates' interlocutors. The question then naturally arises: why would Plato have Socrates voice three prior arguments that he knows full well are invalid? Methods to address this concern generally take either the approach of finding ways to read the arguments as valid,⁷⁷ or at least stronger than Socrates' interlocutors make them seem,⁷⁸ or else claiming that the four arguments need not be valid, since Socrates' four arguments are meant to work more on a rhetorical level than an intellectual one.⁷⁹ The latter approach may be exemplified by Plass, who argues that "as a dialectician [Socrates] is perhaps more responsive to the practical needs of persuasion than to the demands of logic, and his reasoning especially in the earlier dialogues is often very informal."⁸⁰ However, determining

immortality: one arguing that one should not kill oneself (61d-2e), and one arguing that the philosopher should have great hope when faced with death, because he will gain true and full knowledge once he has reached the afterlife (63e-67c). The first of these is generally characterized as mere "opening" or "preliminary" conversation (Bluck, Bostock, Gallop, Rowe), while the second is often called something like "Socrates' Defense" (Bostock, Gallop), since Socrates jokes before the argument that he will try to give a better defense of the idea that the philosopher should not fear death than he did to the Athenian jury at his recent trial. Commentators have certainly raised interesting points regarding these two earlier arguments (see esp. Bostock's discussion of the immortal soul, 21-41), but do not take them to have any bearing on the overall argumentative structure of the dialogue.

⁷⁷ E.g., Dorter (1977) for the Cyclical Argument; Osei (2001) for the Recollection Argument; Apolloni (1996) for the Affinity Argument, Denyer (2007) and Frede (1978) for the Final Argument.

⁷⁸ This approach is taken with the Affinity Argument in particular, because of it is an argument from analogy rather than a deductive argument—although Apolloni (1996) has recently argued that the argument can be understood as a deductive one. An in-depth discussion of approaches to this argument are given in Chapters 2.2.2 and 3.1.3.

⁷⁹ There is also the approach of Gallop, who argues that the four arguments are "a developing sequence" in which "the earlier arguments are criticized, refined, or superseded, until Socrates' belief in immortality is finally vindicated" (103).

⁸⁰ Plass 1960, 107.

whether Socrates' arguments for the immortality of the soul are in any way valid is beyond the scope of this dissertation, and has no implications for my thesis either way.

The argument of Socrates' that has the most implications for this dissertation—and the argument that is often taken to be, if not valid, at least his strongest—is the Final Argument. The Final Argument has attracted much scholarly attention over the years for a number of reasons. Socrates seems to believe the Final Argument is conclusive,⁸¹ because he claims to have proven with the argument that the soul is immortal (77c6-7, 77d5), and because he gives no more arguments afterward for the immortality of the soul. In addition, the Final Argument relies explicitly on the Hypothesis of the Forms, so Socrates' introduction of the Forms and of the Method of Hypothesis⁸² in general, just prior to the Final Argument, seems to give readers a much richer context in which to interpret the Final Argument than we have for the prior arguments. Finally, the Final Argument is followed immediately by the myth in the dialogue, so many scholars have examined what connections there might be between the Final Argument and the Myth (discussed in section 1.2.3 below). Thus the position of the Final Argument in the dialogue, just after Socrates discusses the Method of Hypothesis and the Hypothesis of the Forms, and just before he tells a myth about what happens to the immortal soul in the afterlife, has attracted more scholarly attention than the validity of the argument.

Socrates introduces the Method of Hypothesis by explaining that earlier in his life, he was searching for the “form of the cause” of things (τῆς αἰτίας τὸ εἶδος, 100b3-4). He then began hypothesizing that the Forms exist, and from there, supposed that each particular thing is made,

⁸¹ Cf. Frede 1978, 3.

⁸² As I argue in Sections 2.3 and 3.2, each of Socrates' four arguments for the immortality of the soul relies on the Hypothesis of the Forms, and thus on the Method of Hypothesis more generally. However, it is only in the Final Argument that Socrates gives his reasons for doing so.

e.g., beautiful because of the Beautiful Itself.⁸³ There is much controversy over what Socrates means by αἰτία here,⁸⁴ and over whether Socrates' characterization of the Forms in *Phaedo* implicates them in the Third Man Argument.⁸⁵ However, there does seem to be a prevailing consensus that, if nothing else, Socrates' shift earlier in life to the Method of Hypothesis is a shift from explaining worldly phenomena via definitions to explaining them via reasons for their being the way they are, i.e., causes.⁸⁶ This allows Socrates to argue, in the Final Argument, that it is the Form of Soul that causes life, and because it cannot admit of the opposite of life, death, the Form of Soul causes each individual soul to be ever-living and everlasting. This is the first of Socrates' arguments for the immortality of the soul that relies on a notion of Forms as *causes* (the other arguments rely on other qualities of the Forms, but do not require them to be causes), so another reason that Socrates may think his Final Argument to be the most decisive is because he makes clear just before the argument how Forms are the only appropriate answer to the question of why things are the way they are.

1.2.3 The Relationship between The Arguments and The Myth

The relationship between Socrates' myth and the four arguments for the immortality of the soul in *Phaedo* has long been a topic of debate. The main contention is between scholars who see the myth (or Socrates' myths generally) as capable of having a function—on the intellectual

⁸³ This is a very condensed explanation of Socrates' story; a fuller discussion is given in Chapter 3.2.

⁸⁴ Most scholars attempt to map Socrates' meaning of αἰτία here onto one or more of Aristotle's Four Causes. See especially Vlastos (1989 [1969]), Taylor (1998 [1969]), and Sedley (1998).

⁸⁵ See in particular Sedley (1998).

⁸⁶ E.g., Matthews and Blackson (1989), Vlastos (1989 [1969]).

level—that Socrates’ arguments do not, and those who deny that this is possible. There is a general consensus that Socrates’ myth is intended to be persuasive, but some deny that this persuasion can work in a rational manner, on the level of the intellect.⁸⁷ Rather, they believe that Plato’s myths are intended to work on the lower parts of the soul, similarly to how his rational arguments (i.e., dialectic) are intended to work on the higher, rational part of the soul. Hitchcock, along with Brisson, emphasizes the benefit of appealing to the lower parts of the soul as a way of reinforcing the knowledge one has gained through dialectic: “[Myths’] vivid presentation of a possible detailed working out of these principles [i.e., the implications of the soul’s immortality] acts as a charm or incantation for the soul, which supplements the charm exercised by rational argument. In this respect Platonic myth is not an independent access to reality but a means of reinforcing what Plato’s hearers have already been persuaded by argument to believe.”⁸⁸ Edelstein makes a similar argument, claiming that both the rational and irrational parts of the soul are the purview of the philosopher: “the ethical myth [such as that in *Phaedo*] is rooted in man's irrational nature, and it cannot be banished from philosophy because both these parts of the human soul must be equally tended by the philosopher” (474). Somewhat similarly, Trabatttoni believes that the function of myth is to vividly describe the metaphysical reality of something whose existence Socrates has argued for in propositional language, such as the immortal, discarnate soul.

However, it is difficult to see how myth could be working *only* on a non-rational level, considering that Socrates occasionally characterizes myths as “proofs,”⁸⁹ and that, as Rowe has argued, no type of discourse—even mythological discourse—can directly address the non-rational parts of the soul. It is true, as Hitchcock and others have noted, that Socrates refers to the *Phaedo*

⁸⁷ E.g., Edelstein (1949), Hitchcock (1973), Brisson (2004 [1996]), and Trabatttoni (2012).

⁸⁸ Hitchcock (1973) ii-iii.

⁸⁹ *Phaedrus* 245b-c; *Phaedo* 77c6-7, 77d5.

myth as a “charm,”⁹⁰ but it is also true that mythological discourse is still discourse, and it would seem to need to be taken in through the intellect in some way in order to have a charming effect at all. This notion, and the idea that many of Plato’s myths have a philosophical character,⁹¹ motivate those such as Rowe (1999), as well as Partenie and Morgan, to claim that “a sense of the ‘fictionality’ of human utterance, as provisional, inadequate, and at best approximating to the truth, will infect Platonic writing at its deepest level, below...the distinction between mythical and non-mythical forms of discourse” (265). Whatever complications mythological discourse brings with it are not so different from the complications any other form of discourse brings. Philosophical discourse encourages reflection by its very nature, which, Morgan argues, is why philosophical myths are no less efficacious than other types of philosophical discourse: “philosophical myth achieves its intellectual power by encouraging methodological reflection and self-consciousness about the status of philosophical discourse” (164). Once we see this, Rowe argues, we will understand not “that ‘myth’ will fill in the gaps that reason leaves (though it might do that too, as well as serving special purposes for particular audiences), but that human reason itself ineradicably displays some of the features we characteristically associate with story-telling” (1999), 265-6.

⁹⁰ This is discussed at length in section 4.4.

⁹¹ Even some such as Edelstein admit to the philosophical importance of the myths: “Without the addition of a myth, some of the philosophical investigations would certainly not reach their goal” (1949, 466).

1.3 Definitions of Argument Types

1.3.1 Argument

Let us return momentarily to the rough definition of an argument that I gave in Section I for one further refinement. This definition was simply that an argument requires both a conclusion and one or more reasons for that conclusion (premises). Currently in the field of argument studies, one approach to refining this basic definition, which might be called a “pragmatic” approach, is to state specifically that the function of an argument is persuasion, so that a more complete definition of an argument would be:

A collection of propositions is an argument if and only if there is a reasoner who puts forward some of them (the premises) as reasons in support of one of them (the conclusion) in order to rationally persuade⁹² an audience of the truth of the conclusion.⁹³

This definition has a two main advantages: it not only explains why arguments have the structure they do (that is, in order to persuade the audience), but it also helps to distinguish arguments from other types of discourse that may involve premises and conclusions, such as explanations and hypothetical investigations. It is the *persuasive* intent of an argument that differentiates it from these other types of discourse.

One criticism of this definition, however, is that arguers may want to persuade their audiences to have, rather, any number of attitudes toward the conclusion of the argument, such as withholding assent from the conclusion (as in a *reductio*) or fearing that the conclusion is true. In

⁹² The motivation for saying “rationally persuade” is simply to rule out so-called non-rational persuasive forces, such as threats, from counting as arguments.

⁹³ McKeon (2019).

order to accommodate this seemingly valid criticism, I see no reason not to make a slight adaptation to the commonly accepted pragmatic definition:

A collection of propositions is an argument if and only if there is a reasoner who puts forward some of them (the premises) as reasons in support of one of them (the conclusion) in order to rationally persuade an audience *to have a certain attitude toward* the conclusion.

This refinement of the pragmatic definition retains its advantages while accommodating the idea that arguers are not always aiming to persuade their interlocutors to believe the conclusion to the argument at hand.

1.3.2 Propositional Argument

Using the definition of argument given just above in 1.3.1, I begin to argue in Section 2.4 that the myth in *Phaedo* should be understood as an argument. In Sections 2.2.1 and 3.2, I also argue that one of the ‘preliminary’ arguments in *Phaedo*—one given before the four arguments for the immortality of the soul—must be taken into account in order to understand the overall argumentative structure of the *Phaedo*. For the sake of clarity, I will refer to all arguments given in non-mythological language, whether one of the four for immortality or one of the ‘preliminary,’ as “propositional arguments.” By this, I simply mean that they are written in a form that is easily recognized as propositional, and I use the term merely to distinguish arguments written in propositional language from those written in mythological language.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ The term “propositional language” is, admittedly, not an ideal one, for myths, too, are written in language that is ‘propositional,’ in at least one sense of the term. Most terms that one might be tempted to use to distinguish the language of Plato’s myths from that of his other arguments, such as ‘discursive’ or ‘argumentative,’ would be confusing in this context because one of my overall aims is to argue that Plato’s myths *are* argumentative, despite their mythological language. The terms “literal” and “non-literal” have also been suggested to mark the distinction

1.4 Structure of this Dissertation

The fundamental aim of this dissertation is to show that the eschatological myths Socrates tells in Platonic dialogues, and the myth in *Phaedo* in particular, should not *prima facie* be dismissed as nonargumentative (and therefore inconsequential) to the argumentative structure of the dialogues.

In Chapter 2, I make a case for understanding the myth of *Phaedo* as an argument by demonstrating its underlying argumentative structure. To do so, I use the Toulmin method of argument analysis, one that has become popular over the last fifty or so years in various fields for both constructing and analyzing informal arguments (2.2). I provide diagrams and outlines in 2.3 of the propositions used both in the myth and in the other arguments of the *Phaedo*—including one of the ‘preliminary’ arguments. These diagrams make clear both the unproven assumptions underlying those premises and where Socrates expresses any level of probability or doubt about his arguments. I show in 2.4 that each argument in the dialogue leading up to the myth relies on the Hypothesis of the Forms, and then in 2.5, that because the myth uses the conclusion of the previous arguments—that the soul is immortal—as its hypothesis, the myth, too, ultimately rests on the Hypothesis of the Forms.

Chapter 3 bolsters the argument begun in Chapter 2 by showing how the myth in *Phaedo* has a similar demonstrative status to some of the propositional arguments, strengthening the case that the myth should be thought of as an argument as well. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 argue that the demonstrative status Socrates assigns to each argument (including the myth) is determined by

between these types of discourse, but this, too, seems inadequate; Plato’s myths are literal to a great extent, even if they also involve elements that are non-literal, and this is something that distinguishes his myths from his allegories.

whether Socrates believes the argument can be proven, not by the type of discourse it uses (i.e., mythological or propositional). While two of the arguments in the dialogue are able to prove that the soul is immortal, at least according to Socrates, the other three contain details about what happens to the soul in the afterlife, details that cannot be proven. It is this feature, I argue, that determines whether discourse about the immortal soul can be proven: only the fact that the soul is immortal can be proven, while details about what happens to the soul after death are necessarily more speculative. The reason for this, discussed in 2.3 and 3.2, is that Socrates believes that the soul's immortality follows directly from the Hypothesis of the Forms, his highest and most trusted Hypothesis. On the other hand, details about what happens to the soul after death follow from a lower Hypothesis, and thus cannot be considered proven.

Having given reasons for understanding the *Phaedo* myth as an argument in terms of both its structure (Chapter 2) and its demonstrative abilities (Chapter 3), I turn in Chapter 4 to a discussion of the unique persuasive features of the myth that help to distinguish its function from those of the propositional arguments. While the myth shares some persuasive features with the propositional arguments (4.3), I argue that the myth persuades both in a rational way by giving greater reason to trust that the lower hypothesis that the soul is immortal, and also in a non-rational way by “charming away” the “fears” of those who hear it (4.4). Finally, section 4.5 examines why these persuasive functions are, within the dramatic setting of the dialogue, ultimately unsuccessful on Simmias and Cebes.

Chapter 5 compares these findings briefly with myths of other Platonic dialogues, including the Myth of Er in *Republic* (5.1.1), the charioteer myth in *Phaedrus* (5.1.2), and the myth about the judgment of souls in *Gorgias*. While both the Myth of Er and the charioteer myth are largely consistent with my findings about the *Phaedo* myth, the myth in *Gorgias* has only some of the

thematic and argumentative features that can be found in the other eschatological myths (5.1.3). I suggest that one reason for this may be that the argumentative context of *Gorgias* differs from that of *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic* because Socrates' interlocutors are eager to disbelieve and refute him rather than take his arguments seriously. I conclude by suggesting that further study should be done into the argumentative functions of the myths in *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, and *Gorgias*, and that the results of such studies be used to generate a richer and more nuanced understanding of Socrates' epistemological views.

Chapter 2

In this chapter, I analyze the fundamental argumentative structure of each argument in *Phaedo*, as well as the fundamental argumentative structure of the myth. Using the Toulmin method of analysis, I provide diagrams that show the relationships among the propositions used in each argument, in order to call attention to the unproven assumptions, or hypotheses, underlying those premises (section 2.3). My analyses also make clear exactly where likelihood or probability enters each of Socrates' arguments, which allows us to track the level of assurance Socrates claims to have in each proposition. In section 2.4, I show that each of Socrates' arguments in the dialogue relies on the Hypothesis of the Forms as an unproven assumption, and I argue that each of Socrates' arguments is meant to strengthen his interlocutors' confidence not only in his claim that the soul is immortal, but also in the Hypothesis of the Forms itself. Finally (section 2.5), I provide a structural analysis of the myth in order to show the nuances of its relationship to Socrates' other arguments and to the hypotheses on which it is based, in particular, the Hypothesis of the Forms. Throughout the chapter, I begin to elucidate both the rational, argumentative function of Socrates' arguments and of the myth (discussed in depth in Chapter 3), as well as the persuasive functions of both types of argument (Chapter 4).

2.1 A Note on Method: The Toulmin Model

Since Aristotle's time, philosophers and logicians have been analyzing arguments by classifying propositions as premises and conclusions, and by evaluating them as valid or invalid

based on certain criteria. For our present purposes, however, I want to focus not on the *validity* of Socrates' arguments or on the mere identification and critique of their premises and conclusions; rather, the aim of this chapter is to analyze the *relationships* between Socrates' various propositions (as well as their relationships to his conclusions), with particular attention to the unproven assumptions they rely on. This type of analysis will show that Socrates uses the hypothesis of the Form as an unproven assumption in each argument, and will elucidate where elements of likelihood or probability enter into each argument. Because my analyses will focus on the demonstrative status of each proposition and the dependence of various propositions on one another, I will be using the method of argument analysis first presented by Stephen E. Toulmin in 1958 in *The Uses of Argument*. Although philosophers were initially resistant to this model when it was first introduced (Toulmin 2006), its success in other fields such as jurisprudence and psychology has, more recently, made those in other fields give it further consideration.⁹⁵ An explanation of 'The Toulmin Model' is now "an obligatory chapter" in every textbook in speech communications, and in the sub-field of informal logic, Toulmin's book has become "a post-war classic" (Hitchcock and Verheij 2006, 3). As I will show momentarily, the Toulmin Model has advantages over more traditional methods of argument analysis because it makes clearer both the relationships among premises and the types of justification that are necessary for accepting each premise.

Toulmin's method classifies the propositions of an argument into what he calls Claims, Data, and Warrants. A Claim is a conclusion, the Data are "the facts we appeal to as a foundation for the Claim," while the Warrants are "general" statements that "can act as bridges" between Data

⁹⁵ The Toulmin model has been used, e.g., to analyze multimodal arguments in scientific writing (Whithaus 2012), to teach "religious doubt" in the field of Theology (Horne 2008), and to analyze how people solve "ill-structured problems" (Voss 2006).

and Claims, so that we can say “‘Whenever [Data], one *has found* that [Claim]’ and ‘Whenever [Data], one *may take it* that [Claim].’”⁹⁶ To take a rather classic example:

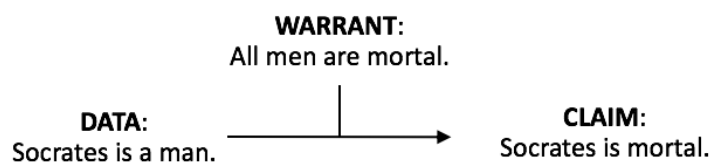


Figure 1

Here, the general proposition (Warrant) that “all men are mortal” allows us to infer, from the fact that Socrates is a man (Data), that he is also mortal (Claim). The Warrant acts as a bridge between the Data and the Claim, and it could do so for any number of other similar data and claims, such as bridging the Data that ‘Toulmin is a man’ and the Claim that ‘Toulmin is mortal.’ From this example alone, there doesn’t seem to be much difference between Toulmin’s method and Aristotelian syllogisms. However, the greater richness and precision of the Toulmin Model becomes clear once we include a fourth element in the analysis: the Backing, which justifies the Warrant.

The Backing of a Warrant is meant to answer the question “But why do you think that?” (that is, Why do you think the Warrant is true?) (96). Toulmin hesitates to give a precise characterization of Backing because what is permissible as Backing will vary greatly between contexts.⁹⁷ For instance, the basic syllogism above will have different Backings if it is given in a philosophical or scientific context. A philosopher might cite the Backing that it is the nature of

⁹⁶ Toulmin (1958), 90-2.

⁹⁷ Toulmin believes that the Backing of arguments is what allows us to see how very field-dependent arguments are. Backings not only allow us to see in what field an argument is being made, but also help to define what counts as an actual argument in a given situation. Some unproven assumption(s) must be granted, but what exactly these are will depend on the context. As Shorey comments in the notes to his translation of a similar concept at *Republic* 510c: “Cf. the mediaeval ‘*contra principium negantem non est disputandum*.’ A teacher of geometry will refuse to discuss the psychology of the idea of space, a teacher of chemistry will not permit the class to ask whether matter is ‘real’” (1935 [1970], 111).

man to be mortal, while a scientist might cite the Backing that the biology of the human body prohibits it from living forever. Toulmin’s structuring of these arguments would look like this:⁹⁸

Philosophical Context

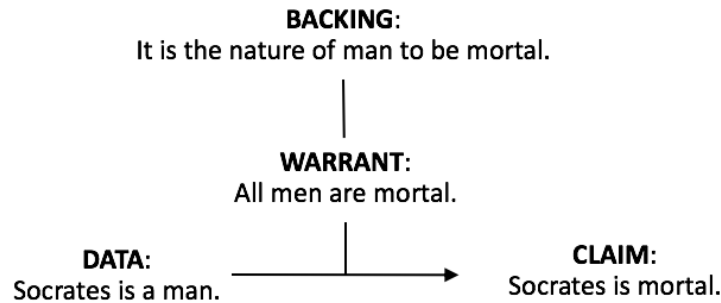


Figure 2

Scientific Context

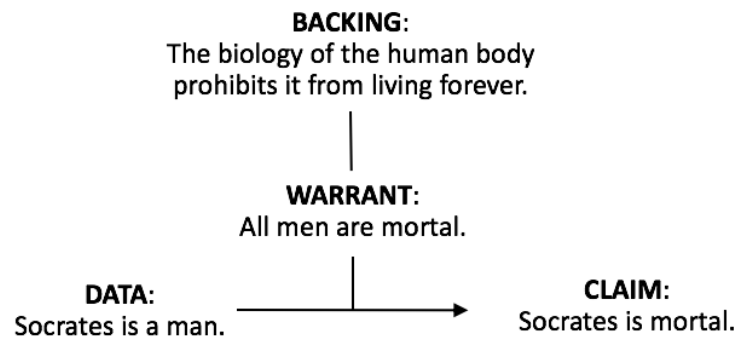


Figure 3

Backings are generally “categorical statements of fact” that “[lend] authority” to Warrants, and this is why they vary so greatly depending on context. What ‘lends authority to a Warrant’ depends

⁹⁸ Those familiar with the Toulmin model will notice that I have inverted Toulmin’s traditional diagrams on the horizontal axis, so that the Warrants and Backings appear *above* the Data and Claims, rather than below. This will better reflect the relationships among propositions that Socrates uses in his arguments in *Phaedo*, particularly when it comes to ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ hypotheses. See also sections 2.3 and 3.2.

not only the field of the argument (e.g., philosophy, science, law), but also on what the arguer's interlocutors or listeners are willing to accept.

In Toulmin's characterization of arguments, all of the aforementioned elements—Claim, Data, Warrant, and Backing—will be present in an argument, although not every element need be explicitly stated. Just as other methods of analysis allow us to identify hidden premises, or those which are not stated by the arguer but are required for the argument, Toulmin's model also allows us to identify unstated premises, such as a hidden Claim or a hidden Backing.

In conversation in particular, our arguments may not follow the pattern 'Warrant and Data, therefore Claim.' We might just as easily say 'Backing and Data, therefore Claim,' or even 'Data, therefore Claim.' In the following argument, for instance, normally only the Warrant *or* the Backing would be stated, since they would be somewhat redundant in casual conversation:

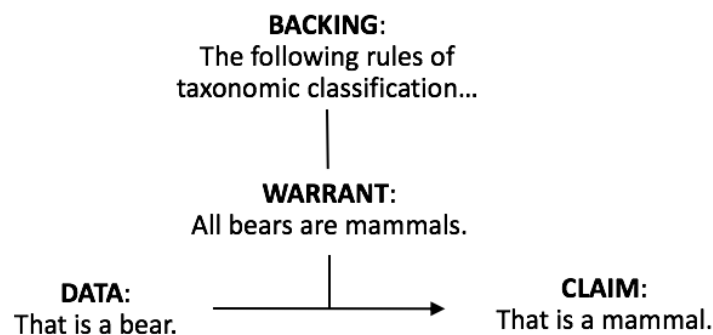


Figure 4

Even though we might cite *either* the Backing *or* the Warrant in our argument, only the form of the argument that includes the Warrant, Data, and Claim would be considered a formally valid argument. However, we would be remiss not to accept an argument that includes only the *Backing*, Data, and Claim as sufficient proof that in looking at this bear, we are looking at a mammal.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁹ Cf. Toulmin 1958; 111, 117.

fact that I might choose to cite precise rules of taxonomy in order to tell you *why* all bears are mammals does not in any way detract from my argument *that* all bears are mammals—rather, under many circumstances, we would think my cataloging of taxonomic knowledge to be a *stronger* argument than one that simply says *that* all bears are mammals without explaining why. This is a subtlety, however, that can be easily missed when using methods of argument analysis that focus on formal validity.

Two further aspects of Toulmin’s method of analysis must be mentioned before explaining the full appeal of Toulmin’s method for philosophical contexts and for Socrates’ arguments in particular. Because Toulmin’s method is built for informal and conversational arguments in particular, the method recognizes the need to state Qualifications (by hedging Claims or other propositions with “probably,” “likely,” etc.), as well as the need to address Rebuttals, and these both receive their own place in his diagrams. For an example that includes both:

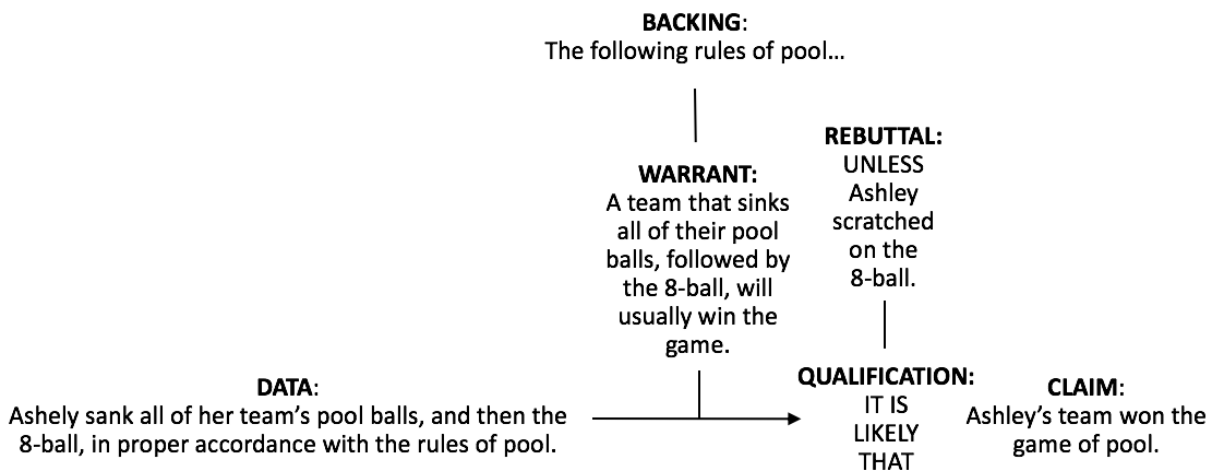


Figure 5

Toulmin’s permission of Qualifications is nothing novel, as these are included in many traditional methods of analysis. But there is a somewhat unique role that Rebuttals play in Toulmin analyses, since Rebuttals can be either counterarguments that the arguer herself addresses within the argument, or they can be reservations or counterarguments that are brought up by another speaker,

which are technically ‘outside’ of the argument. By using the Toulmin method to show the relationship between Rebuttals and the argument an arguer has made, we are better able to see the precise proposition that the Rebuttal contests, and therefore better able to see how fundamental an objection to the argument it may be.

I hope I have made clear two of Toulmin’s main aims in developing this method of argument analysis: to better show the relationships among various propositions¹⁰⁰ in an argument, and to highlight the different types of justification that are necessary for accepting Warrants in different contexts. These, however, are reasons for using the Toulmin method to analyze arguments in *any* field, and there are more reasons still for using this method in the context of scholarship on ancient philosophy, and on Plato’s texts in particular. First, Socrates’ arguments are decidedly colloquial: they often involve discussion with interlocutors, and because they are written in dialogue form, they have a temporal aspect as they play out in the dramatic conversation. Socrates’ arguments often—particularly in *Phaedo*—adapt in time to what his interlocutors are willing to accept at that moment, and thus have a more organic and adaptive ‘shape’ than a more formal argument. Thus Toulmin’s model, which makes literal room in the argument schema for including and addressing Rebuttals, provides a way to more fully reflect the dialogue form of Socrates’ arguments. Second, the type of argument that Socrates makes is precisely the type of argument that Toulmin’s method was created for, that is, informal arguments that aim to justify assertions in ways appropriate to a particular context, rather than by strictly valid means. Toulmin’s schema intentionally privileges the “reasonable” over the “rational” (i.e., the formally

¹⁰⁰ Throughout this dissertation, the term “propositions” will be used to denote any of the premises or the conclusion to an argument, regardless of whether they are classed as Claims, Data, Warrants, etc. This more general term will be useful because, in more complex arguments, one proposition can function in two or more roles within a (larger) argument—for instance, a proposition can be both the Claim of one sub-argument and a Warrant for another sub-argument.

valid), and in doing so, is able to better accommodate the psychological factors that make arguments ‘seem reasonable’ and ‘seem good,’ even when they are not, strictly speaking, valid or sound.¹⁰¹ Plato’s characters don’t always make arguments that meet basic standards of validity, nor, does it seem, are they necessarily trying to. Because this model aims to accommodate ‘invalid’ reasoning that is still persuasive, its framework is necessarily a bit looser than traditional methods of argument analysis, but it is also better able to accommodate the complexity of arguing to another person in time, as well as the myriad factors that have an effect on the persuasiveness of an argument. In addition, the arguments that I analyze throughout this chapter—Socrates’ arguments regarding the nature of the soul and its fate after death—make claims about matters that are outside the realm of human knowledge. In making such arguments, we cannot appeal to a set of man-made laws or rules as the Backings for our claims (as we could in the fields of law or taxonomy, or when playing pool), nor can we appeal to discoverable laws of nature (as we could in the field of physics). Rather, the only Backings that Socrates can provide for his Warrants will be unproven and unprovable. These unprovable Backings are essential to understanding the overall argumentative structure of *Phadeo*, because they show the unproven hypotheses on which each argument is based.

Finally, we should note that any formal method of argument analysis was, at least for the most part, developed after Plato’s time. Of course, it is reasonable to think that ideas about the underlying formal structures of logical arguments were percolating in the intellectual ether in Plato’s time, just as the concept of an axiomatic system had been percolating before Euclid wrote *Elements*. However, the systemization and codification of this was begun by Aristotle, one of

¹⁰¹ Cf. Hitchcock and Verheij 2006, 23; Woods 2006, 20-1.

Plato's students, and would not have had nearly the same influence on Plato as it has on us today.¹⁰² For all of these reasons, it will be fruitful to examine Socrates' arguments about the soul in *Phaedo* using Toulmin's method rather than more traditional methods that emphasize validity and soundness. For many years, scholars have performed more traditional analyses of these arguments, and have made enlightening observations about their structure and validity. However, the Toulmin Model has yet to be embraced by the field of Classical Studies, and I am unaware of any scholar who has used this model to analyze Plato's arguments. I hope that by doing so, these analyses will bring to light new observations about the structures of the propositions in his arguments (in this Chapter), such as how various propositions build on one another or are recycled in later arguments, and how each argument in the dialogue is based on the hypothesis of the Forms.

2.2 Analyses of the Arguments in *Phaedo*

It is generally accepted that *Phaedo* contains four separate arguments for the immortality of the soul. However, as I will explain in this section, conceiving of the structure of the *Phaedo* in this way overlooks both the argument Socrates gives before these four arguments (which I call the Argument for Great Hope), as well as the fact that Socrates himself says that 'two' of these

¹⁰² In their classic *The Development of Logic*, Kneale and Kneale (1962) note that "in the Peripatetic tradition [of which Plato was a part], ...logic never became a part of philosophy, a subject in its own right, but was treated as a capacity (δύναμις) which might be acquired or as an art (τέχνη) to be learnt" (14-5). They cite Aristotle himself as claiming "to be breaking entirely new ground" with his logical works, and though they note that Aristotle's predecessors or contemporaries might have "tried to give principles as distinct from examples," it is still true that "there was no systematic treatise on the subject of argument" before Aristotle (15). Plato's contribution to logic, they claim, is that he tackled questions in the philosophy of logic, namely, questions of truth and falsehood, of necessary connections between thoughts (or perhaps necessary connections among the Forms, cf. 18-20), and of definition (17).

arguments—commonly called the ‘Cyclical Argument’ and the ‘Recollection Argument’—are complementary sides to *one* argument for the immortality of the soul (77c). For these reasons, I will use a slightly different division of the arguments in *Phaedo*, as outlined in the chart below.¹⁰³ In this section, I diagram these arguments according to the Toulmin Model, in order to highlight the ways that various propositions depend on one another. These diagrams show which propositions are unproven (i.e., the “Backings” for the arguments), as well as which propositions introduce a degree of uncertainty or likelihood into the arguments, and how that uncertainty continues into other sub-arguments that depend on those uncertain propositions. In section 2.3, I show how Socrates characterizes each of his arguments as more likely to be true than the previous argument, and I argue that because each argument is based on the hypothesis of the Forms, these arguments serve not only to justify the Claim that the soul is immortal, but also to examine and justify the Backing of the hypothesis of the Forms itself.

Argument for Great Hope (AGH) (63e-67e): AGH argues that a philosopher should not fear death because his soul will gain the greatest knowledge in the afterlife.

Cyclical/Recollection Argument (CRA) (70c-72e and 73b-76e): CA argues that because opposites come from opposites, living beings come from dead beings. RA argues that the soul must exist before birth because we recollect knowledge we learned before birth.

Affinity Argument (AA) (78b-84b): AA argues for the immortality of the soul based on an analogy between the soul and objects in the realm of Forms.

¹⁰³ Although I believe the breakdown of arguments listed here is fully justified by the text (discussed at greater length in the analysis of each argument throughout this Chapter, see esp. 2.2.2), my analysis of the myth *as* an argument itself (section 2.4) in no way depends on accepting this breakdown of the rest of the arguments.

Final Argument (FA) (102b-107a): FA argues for the immortality of the soul because the soul is the source of life and cannot admit death.

The Myth (107c-115a): The Myth argues that one must pursue reason and virtue in life in order to have a pleasant and afterlife.

2.2.1 The Argument for Great Hope (AGH)

What I am here calling “The Argument for Great Hope” (AGH) is not one of the four arguments for the immortality of the soul. This argument comes before the other arguments, and rather than *argue* for the immortality of the soul, it *assumes* that the soul is immortal. Socrates gives the AGH when he is first trying to convince Simmias and Cebes that there is no reason to be saddened by his impending execution. Once Simmias agrees that death is the separation of soul and body (64c), Socrates aims to show him that the soul of a philosopher will finally attain true wisdom after death (66d-e). Socrates concludes that a philosopher facing death should be “hopeful” (εὐελπίς, 64a1) when facing death, that there is “great hope” (πολλὴ ἐλπίς, 67b8) that his soul will gain knowledge in the afterlife, and that his “departure [into death] is accompanied by good hope” (ἀποδημία... μετὰ ἀγαθῆς ἐλπίδος, 67c1). The following argument analysis, using the Toulmin model, shows how the various propositions Socrates provides rely on one another. Citations for each proposition are given just below, in the order they occur in the text.¹⁰⁴ Because

¹⁰⁴ The position of each proposition in the following diagrams does not follow the order in which the propositions are written in the text. This is partially because Plato’s dialogues are more linear than a Toulmin diagram, simply by the nature of how words are written on a page. However, the main reason for this is that Socrates often speaks his conclusions before his premises, or tentatively states a conclusion before providing more reasons for agreeing with that conclusion (more premises). In the lists below, propositions are listed by their first occurrence, and additional citations are provided if the proposition is later repeated.

the AGH is a more complex argument than, e.g., a syllogism, some propositions are used in multiple ways. For instance, the proposition that “knowledge is best acquired outside of the body” (proposition 5) is used as Backing for two other propositions, and it is also the Claim that concludes a sub-argument that the nature of the objects of knowledge requires that humans come to know them without the aid of the body. Because propositions can act in multiple ways in these arguments, I will refer to them as “propositions” unless speaking of their particular role as Backing, Warrant, Claim, etc.

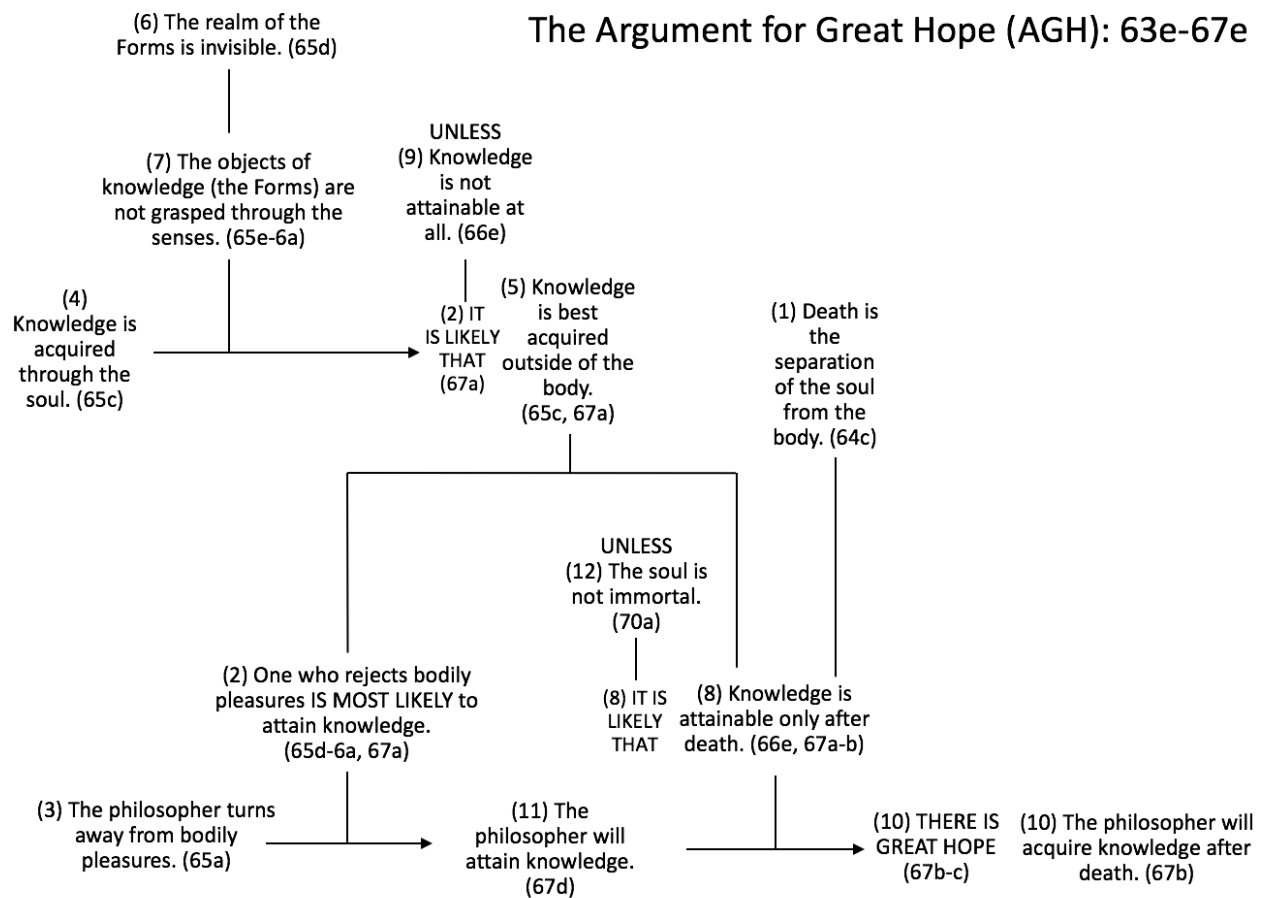


Figure 6

AGH Propositions

1. “Do we believe that some ‘death’ exists? ... Is it something other than the release of the soul from the body?” (ἡγοούμεθα τι τὸν θάνατον εἶναι; ... ἄρα μὴ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἀπαλλαγὴν; 64c2, 4-5).
2. This proposition is left unstated until quite close to the end of the argument, but it is suggested by Socrates’ discussions of how the philosopher rejects bodily pleasures (64d-65a), and how true knowledge cannot be acquired through the body (65d-66a). Cf. 67a: “And while we are living, in this way, it seems, we will be closest to knowledge: if we keep company as little as possible with the body, and we do not take part in it, except when it is entirely necessary” (καὶ ἐν ᾧ ἂν ζῶμεν, οὕτως, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐγγυτάτῳ ἐσόμεθα τοῦ εἰδέναι, ἐὰν ὅτι μάλιστα μηδὲν ὁμιλῶμεν τῷ σώματι μηδὲ κοινωνῶμεν, ὅτι μὴ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη, 67a2-4).
3. “The philosopher frees most of all the soul from association with the body, differently than other men.” (ὁ φιλόσοφος ἀπολύων ὅτι μάλιστα τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ σώματος κοινωνίας διαφερόντως τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων, 65a1-2).
4. “Indeed is it not in reasoning if anywhere that something of what is comes to be discovered by it [the soul]?” (ἄρ’ οὖν οὐκ ἐν τῷ λογίζεσθαι εἴπερ που ἄλλοθι κατάδηλον αὐτῇ γίγνεται τι τῶν ὄντων; 65c2-3).
5. E.g., “[The soul] reasons most at that time when none of these [senses] trouble it in addition.” (λογίζεται δὲ γέ που τότε κάλλιστα, ὅταν αὐτὴν τούτων μηδὲν παραλυπῇ, 65c5-6).
6. “Now have you ever seen one of those [Forms] with your eyes?” / ‘In no way,’ [Simias] said.” (ἤδη οὖν πώποτε τι τῶν τοιούτων τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς εἶδες; ‘οὐδαμῶς,’ ἡ δ’ ὅς., 65d9-10).
7. “Then that one might do this most purely who most of all goes through each thing in thought itself, neither placing some appearance next to his thinking nor dragging in some another

perception with his reasoning” (ἄρ’ οὖν ἐκεῖνος ἂν τοῦτο ποιήσειεν καθαρώτατα ὅστις ὅτι μάλιστα αὐτῇ τῇ διανοίᾳ ἴοι ἐφ’ ἑκάστον, μήτε τιν’ ὅσιν παρατιθέμενος ἐν τῷ διανοεῖσθαι μήτε τινὰ ἄλλην αἴσθησιν ἐφέλκων μηδεμίαν μετὰ τοῦ λογισμοῦ... 65e7-66a1).

8. “And then, it seems likely, that which we desire and of which we declare ourselves to be lovers—wisdom—will be for us, when we have died, as our argument shows, but not while we are living.” (καὶ τότε, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἡμῖν ἔσται οὗ ἐπιθυμοῦμέν τε καὶ φαμεν ἐρασταὶ εἶναι, φρονήσεως, ἐπειδὴν τελευτήσωμεν, ὡς ὁ λόγος σημαίνει, ζῶσιν δὲ οὐ, 66e1-4). Cf. 67a-b: “Having been cleansed and freed from the thoughtlessness of the body, we will be among things such as this, as is likely, and we will come to know through ourselves all things that are pure” καθαροὶ ἀπαλλαττόμενοι τῆς τοῦ σώματος ἀφροσύνης, ὡς τὸ εἰκὸς μετὰ τοιούτων τε ἐσόμεθα καὶ γνωσόμεθα δι’ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν πᾶν τὸ εἰλικρινές, 67a6-b1).

9. “If indeed it is not possible to come to know clearly with the body, one of two things [is the case]: either it is possible for no one to attain [a state of] knowing, or [one does so only] having died.” (εἰ γὰρ μὴ οἷόν τε μετὰ τοῦ σώματος μηδὲν καθαρῶς γινῶναι, δυοῖν θάτερον, ἢ οὐδαμοῦ ἔστιν κτήσασθαι τὸ εἰδέναι ἢ τελευτήσασιν, 66e4-6).

10. “Then if these things are true, [there is] great hope that, in having arrived where I am driven, likely there, if anywhere, I will acquire that which came to be a great occupation for me in my present life, so that that departure now commanded of me comes to be accompanied by good hope.” (οὐκοῦν, ... εἰ ταῦτα ἀληθῆ, ... πολλὴ ἐλπίς ἀφικομένῳ οἷ ἐγὼ πορεύομαι, ἐκεῖ ἱκανῶς, εἴπερ που ἄλλοθι, κτήσασθαι τοῦτο οὗ ἕνεκα ἢ πολλὴ πραγματεία ἡμῖν ἐν τῷ παρελθόντι βίῳ γέγονεν, ὥστε ἢ γε ἀποδημία ἢ νῦν μοι προστεταγμένη μετὰ ἀγαθῆς ἐλπίδος γίγνεται, 67b7-c2).

11. This proposition is left unstated, but is not at all inconsistent with Socrates’ overall argument, e.g., “Only those philosophizing rightly are eager always and most of all to free [the soul], and this

very practice is of philosophers, the freeing and separating of the soul from the body.” (λύειν δέ γε αὐτήν, ὥς φαμεν, προθυμοῦνται ἀεὶ μάλιστα καὶ μόνοι οἱ φιλοσοφοῦντες ὀρθῶς, καὶ τὸ μελέτημα αὐτὸ τοῦτό ἐστιν τῶν φιλοσόφων, λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, 67d7-10).

12. After Socrates give his argument, Cebes objects: “Those things about the soul give great disbelief to people that, whenever it is released from the body, it no longer still exists.” (τὰ δὲ περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς πολλὴν ἀπιστίαν παρέχει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις μή, ἐπειδὴν ἀπαλλαγῇ τοῦ σώματος, οὐδαμοῦ ἔτι ἦ, 70a1-3).

In the Argument for Great Hope, Socrates uses the idea that the Forms are the objects of true knowledge in order to argue that knowledge is not grasped through the senses, and so is best acquired outside of the body. Because death is the fullest separation of soul from body, it is likely that true knowledge is attainable only after death. And because the philosopher has ‘practiced for death’ by separating himself from bodily cares as much as possible in life, the philosopher has the best chance of acquiring knowledge after death. We should note that the proposition that the realm of Forms is invisible (proposition 6) is at the top of the Toulmin diagram, indicating that it is the highest Backing used in the argument, as this will come into play in my analysis of the overall argumentative structure of *Phaedo*. In addition, we should note that the proposition that death is the separation of the soul from the body (proposition 1) is used as a Backing, but not the highest Backing. This means that although it has no Backing of its own in this particular argument, it is still subordinate to the Backing about the realm of Forms.

There are two Rebuttals to this argument (propositions 9 and 12), neither of which Socrates addresses within the argument itself. These Rebuttals are important because they show how Socrates adapts his later arguments for the immortality of the soul to Simmias’ and Cebes’

objections. Simmias and Cebes do not raise proposition 9 (that knowledge is not attainable at all) as a Rebuttal, but they do raise proposition 12 (that the soul is not immortal) as a Rebuttal to the AGH. Socrates thus does not need to address proposition 9 as a Rebuttal to proposition 5, because his interlocutors do not try to pursue it as an objection to the argument. Neither Socrates nor his interlocutors seem to want to claim that knowledge is actually not attainable at all, but Socrates is still careful to hedge the propositions he states after claiming that knowledge is attainable (proposition 5). For instance, Socrates says only that *if* we can attain knowledge, *it is likely* that this will happen after death:

But in truth it has been shown to us that, *if* ever we are going to know something purely, it is necessary to withdraw from [the body] and to observe things in themselves, through the soul itself. And then, *it seems likely*, there will be for us that which we desire and of which we declare ourselves to be lovers—wisdom—when we have died, as our argument shows, but not while we are living.

ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι ἡμῖν δέδεικται ὅτι, εἰ μέλλομέν ποτε καθαῶς τι εἶσεσθαι, ἀπαλλακτέον αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ θεατέον αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα· καὶ τότε, ὥς ἔοικεν, ἡμῖν ἔσται οὗ ἐπιθυμοῦμέν τε καὶ φαμεν ἐρασταὶ εἶναι, φρονήσεως, ἐπειδὴν τελευτήσωμεν, ὥς ὁ λόγος σημαίνει, ζῶσιν δὲ οὔ. (66d7-e4)

It is *possible*, Socrates seems to say, that true knowledge may not be attainable for human beings, even in the afterlife. But he also does not seem to take this Rebuttal very seriously, because he gives no reason to disbelieve it—that is, he gives no reason to think that knowledge *is* attainable.

Even though Socrates does not seem to consider the Rebuttal that knowledge is not attainable as an actual threat to his argument, it will be helpful to dwell for a moment on how much of this argument the Rebuttal, if correct, would affect. The Rebuttal that knowledge is not attainable at all (proposition 9) is a Qualification to proposition 5 that knowledge is best acquired outside of the body. If the Rebuttal is correct, then not only is proposition 5 incorrect, but every other part of the argument that follows from proposition 5 (propositions 9 and 10) are also incorrect. In the Toulmin diagrams, the propositions that follow from others can be easily seen

because they are either lower on the diagrams or to the right of those from which they follow. The Rebuttal in proposition 9, if it is correct, would ‘contaminate’ propositions 5, 8, and 10, as well as 2 and 11, because it is a direct Rebuttal to proposition 5, which is a Backing for propositions 8 and 2, which are in turn Warrants for propositions 10 and 11, respectively. Even though proposition 9 does not seem to be taken seriously as a Rebuttal in this dialogue (as it is in *Meno*¹⁰⁵), it serves as an example of how a Rebuttal can ‘contaminate’ other propositions in an argument, and how these can be located in the Toulmin diagrams.

In contrast, the other Rebuttal to the AGH (proposition 12, that the soul is not immortal) does play an important role in the overall argumentative structure of *Phaedo*. This Rebuttal is raised by Cebes, shortly after Socrates has finished the AGH, so there is an exigency in the conversation for Socrates to address it. Cebes worries that, even if death is the separation of the soul from the body, the soul may be “destroyed and demolished” when it is separated from the body (διαφθείρηται τε καὶ ἀπολλύεται, 70a3-4). It seems that when Socrates says that death is the separation of the soul from the body (proposition 1),¹⁰⁶ he means that the soul separates from the

¹⁰⁵ When Meno brings up the ‘Learner’s Paradox’—that we cannot search for what we know, because we know it, but we also cannot search for what we do not know, because we will not recognize it when we find it (80d)—Socrates takes the time to challenge him: “Seeing that the soul is both deathless and has been born many times, and has seen all things both here and in Hades, there is nothing that it has not learned. And so there is nothing marvelous about the possibility of it recollecting about virtue and other things that it knew before” (ἄτε οὖν ἡ ψυχὴ ἀθάνατός τε οὔσα καὶ πολλάκις γεγονυῖα, καὶ ἑωρακυῖα καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε καὶ τὰ ἐν Ἄϊδου καὶ πάντα χρήματα, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτι οὐ μεμάθηκεν: ὥστε οὐδὲν θαυμαστὸν καὶ περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ περὶ ἄλλων οἷόν τ’ εἶναι αὐτὴν ἀναμνησθῆναι, ἃ γε καὶ πρότερον ἠπίστατο, 81c).

¹⁰⁶ Throughout most of this argument, Socrates uses phrasing that suggests an emphasis on the release or separation of the soul from the body: “for the soul will be itself by itself, apart from the body” (γὰρ αὐτὴ καθ’ αὐτὴν ἡ ψυχὴ ἔσται χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος, 67b); “the separating the soul most of all from the body” (τὸ χωρίζειν ὅτι μάλιστα ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος τὴν ψυχὴν, 67c); “then this is called ‘death,’ the release and separation of the soul from the body?” (οὐκοῦν τοῦτό γε θάνατος ὀνομάζεται, λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, 67d); “the release and separation of the soul from the body” (λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, 67d). This seems to imply that the soul can exist without the body, without implying that the body can exist without the soul. It may be notable, however, that when Socrates first asks Cebes to assent to this definition of death, he *begins* in this same way, by asking about the “the release”—or merely “the separation”—“of the soul from the body” (τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἀπαλλαγὴν), but he then elaborates: “and is dying this—that the body itself by itself comes to be released [or “separated”] from the soul, while the soul itself by itself is released from the body?” (καὶ εἶναι τοῦτο τὸ τεθνάναι, χωρὶς μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπαλλαγὴν

body in order to live on past the body's death, while Cebes understands such a definition of death to commit one only to the idea that the soul leaves the body, and perhaps dissipates upon doing so. In the context of the Toulmin model, this means that Socrates and Cebes agree on this Backing proposition, but they disagree on the implications for its Warrant that knowledge is attainable only after death. Socrates takes the Backing definition of death (proposition 1) to support the Warrant that knowledge *will be* attainable after death (proposition 8), while Cebes takes the Backing to support the Warrant that knowledge *would be* attainable after death—as long as the soul lives beyond the body's death. The AGH *assumed* that the soul was immortal, which we can see in Toulmin diagram by the fact that there is no Backing for the proposition that death is the separation of the soul from the body. Now that Cebes has questioned this assumption, however, Socrates will need to provide Backing for it, which he does by giving the subsequent arguments for the immortality of the soul.

Probability or likelihood play a large role in this argument, even though Socrates is convinced that his Claim (conclusion) is completely true. Socrates does not claim to have provided an irrefutable argument in the AGH, saying instead that “it is necessary to say to one another and to believe these things” about knowledge being possible in the afterlife (τοιαῦτα ... ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι πρὸς ἀλλήλους λέγειν τε καὶ δοξάζειν, 67b2-3). Even though Socrates wants his interlocutors to believe his argument, there are a number of propositions in the argument that are only “likely” or “seemingly so.” Some form of probability or likelihood is introduced just before propositions 5, 8, and 10, which spreads to a number of other propositions that depend on those three as Warrants or Backings: propositions 2, 11, 8, and 10. All of these propositions that depend on

αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα γεγονέναι, χωρὶς δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἀπαλλαγεῖσθαι αὐτὴν καθ' αὐτὴν εἶναι; 64c).

“likely” propositions can be only “likely” themselves; thus the AGH has a rather pervasive sense of (mere) likelihood or probability. Even though Socrates believes that the highest Backing he uses for the argument (proposition 6, regarding the nature of the realm of Forms) leads felicitously to the Claim that the philosopher will acquire knowledge after death (proposition 10), Simmias and Cebes do not see this, and they will require an explicit argument for the immortality of the soul.

2.2.2 The Affinity Argument (AA)

In order to show Simmias and Cebes that the soul is immortal, Socrates next provides what are often called the Cyclical Argument and the Recollection Argument. Socrates says after giving the arguments that if they are combined, they provide a “proof” for the immortality of the soul.¹⁰⁷ Although the analysis of this “proof” is left out of this chapter for brevity’s sake, a Toulmin diagram and textual citations can be found in Appendix A, and its demonstrative status is discussed at length in section 3.1.2. Even after this Cyclical/Recollection Argument (CRA), Simmias and Cebes are still “afraid” that the soul may somehow dissipate when the body dies.¹⁰⁸ Here Simmias and Cebes do not have a specific objection to Socrates’ argument; unlike when they objected to the AGH that the soul may not be immortal, they are here at a loss for an objection based in

¹⁰⁷ Socrates says that the immortality of the soul “has been proven ... even now, if you are willing to put this argument together with the same one on which we agreed before this one... In fact the very thing which you say has even now been proven” (ἀποδέδεικται μὲν ...καὶ νῦν, εἰ θέλετε συνθεῖναι τοῦτόν τε τὸν λόγον εἰς ταῦτόν καὶ ὃν πρὸ τούτου ὡμολογήσαμεν... ἀποδέδεικται μὲν οὖν ὅπερ λέγετε καὶ νῦν, 77c6-7, 77d5).

¹⁰⁸ Cebes asks Socrates to “try to change the persuasion of this [child within] so that he does not fear death just as he does hobgoblins” (τοῦτον οὖν πειρῶ μεταπεῖθειν μὴ δεδιέναι τὸν θάνατον ὥσπερ τὰ μορμολύκεια, 77e7-8). See section 4.4 for a full discussion of the role of fear throughout the dialogue.

argument. Perhaps this is why Socrates' next argument for the immortality of the soul takes on an entirely different structure, that of an analogy.

In the Affinity Argument (AA), Socrates compares the soul with both the realm of the Forms and the realm of particulars. Things in the realm of Forms are invisible, noncomposite, and unchanging, he says, while those in the realm of particulars are visible, composite, and changing. Since the soul is invisible and noncomposite, and more like what is unchanging, the soul is 'most equal to' things in the realm of Forms; and because what is noncomposite and unchanging is not likely to be scattered or otherwise destroyed, the soul is likely to be immortal. My analysis, along with quotations for each proposition, are below:

The Affinity Argument (AA): 78b-84b

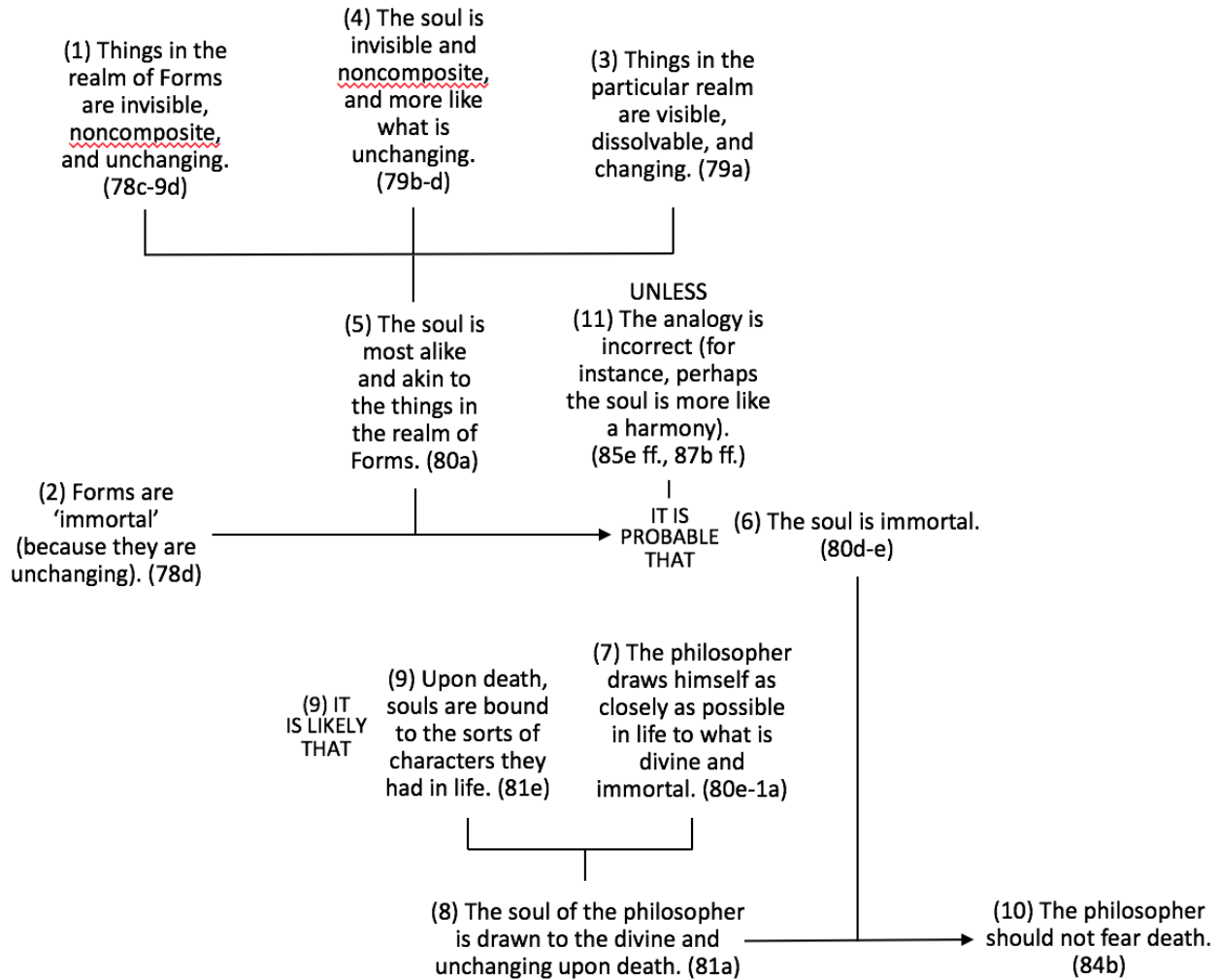


Figure 7

AA Propositions

1. Forms are invisible: “But these such things are unseen and not visible?” (ἀλλ’ ἔστιν ἀιδῆ τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ οὐχ ὁρατά; 79a4). Forms are noncomposite: “Then aren’t those things that are always in accordance with themselves and which remain in the same way likely most of all to be noncomposite? (οὐκοῦν ἅπερ αἰεὶ κατὰ ταῦτα καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχει, ταῦτα μάλιστα εἰκὸς εἶναι τὰ ἀσύνθετα, 78c6-8). Forms are unchanging: “Or does each of these that is, uniform, itself by itself, remain just so in accordance with themselves, and never in any way admit any difference?” (ἢ αἰεὶ

αὐτῶν ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστι, μονοειδὲς ὃν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό, ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχει καὶ οὐδέποτε οὐδαμῇ οὐδαμῶς ἀλλοίωσιν οὐδεμίαν ἐνδέχεται; 78d5-7).

2. Socrates: “Does the Equal itself, the Beautiful itself, and each thing itself that is—the reality—never accept any change whatsoever?” Cebes: “It is necessarily this way for each of these things” (Socrates: αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον, αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν, τὸ ὄν, μὴ ποτε μεταβολὴν καὶ ἡντινοῦν ἐνδέχεται; Cebes: ὡσαύτως ... ἀνάγκη ... κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχειν, 78d2-5, 8).

3. “What of the many beautiful things... are they entirely opposite to those [Forms] and not the same as themselves, neither in relation to one another nor even among themselves?” (τί δὲ τῶν πολλῶν καλῶν... πᾶν τούναντίον ἐκείνοις οὔτε αὐτὰ αὐτοῖς οὔτε ἀλλήλοις οὐδέποτε... οὐδαμῶς κατὰ ταῦτά; 78d10, 78e2-4).

4. Soul is invisible: “Then the soul is more like the unseen than the body, while the [body] [is more like] the visible” (ὁμοιότερον ἄρα ψυχὴ σώματός ἐστιν τῷ αἰδεῖ, τὸ δὲ τῷ ὀρατῷ, 79b16-7). Soul is noncomposite and unchanging: “Whenever [the soul] examines [something] itself by itself, it goes to the other realm, into what is pure and what is always deathless and is always in the same state, and since it is akin to this...” (ὅταν δέ γε αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτὴν σκοπῇ, ἐκεῖσε οἴχεται εἰς τὸ καθαρὸν τε καὶ αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ ἀθάνατον καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχον, καὶ ὥς συγγενὴς οὔσα αὐτοῦ..., 79d1-3).

5. “Consider...if, from all the things said, these things follow for us: that the soul is most equal to that which is divine and deathless and present to the mind and uniform and indissoluble and always remaining just so in accordance with itself” (σκόπει δὴ ... εἰ ἐκ πάντων τῶν εἰρημένων τάδε ἡμῖν συμβαίνει, τῷ μὲν θεῷ καὶ ἀθανάτῳ καὶ νοητῷ καὶ μονοειδεῖ καὶ ἀδιαλύτῳ καὶ αἰεὶ ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχοντι ἑαυτῷ ὁμοιότατον εἶναι ψυχὴν, 80a10-b3).

6. “Will the soul, as soon as it is released from the body, be immediately dispersed and destroyed? Far from it!” (ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἄρα ... ἀπαλλαττομένη τοῦ σώματος εὐθὺς διαπεφύσεται καὶ ἀπόλωλεν...; πολλοῦ γε δεῖ... 80d5, 9-10, 80e1).
7. “This is nothing other than philosophizing rightly and, in fact, practicing dying readily” (τὸ δὲ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ ὀρθῶς φιλοσοφοῦσα καὶ τῷ ὄντι τεθνάναι μελετῶσα ῥαδίως: 80e6-81a1).
8. “Then holding itself in this way, the soul departs into what is like to itself—to the unseen, and the divine and the deathless and intelligible” (οὐκοῦν οὕτω μὲν ἔχουσα εἰς τὸ ὅμοιον αὐτῇ τὸ αἰδὲς ἀπέρχεται, τὸ θεῖόν τε καὶ ἀθάνατον καὶ φρόνιμον, 81a4-5).
9. “[Souls] are bound, as is fitting, into the sorts of characters which they happen to have practiced in life” (ἐνδοῦνται δέ, ὥσπερ εἰκός, εἰς τοιαῦτα ἥθη ὅποῦ ἅτ’ ἂν καὶ μεμελετηκυῖαι τύχωσιν ἐν τῷ βίῳ, 81e2-4).
10. “From such nourishment, there is no danger that one would fear ... that [the soul] would be torn apart ... and no longer be anywhere” (ἐκ δὴ τῆς τοιαύτης τροφῆς οὐδὲν δεινὸν μὴ φοβηθῇ, ... ὅπως μὴ διασπασθεῖσα ... καὶ οὐδὲν ἔτι οὐδαμοῦ ᾗ, 84b3-5, 7).
11. Simmias objects after Socrates’ argument that perhaps the soul is more like a harmony (85e-86d), while Cebes suggests that the soul is to the body as a man is to the set of cloaks he wears out in his lifetime (87b-88b).

In the AA, Socrates argues that the soul has a greater affinity with things in the realm of Forms than with things in the realm of particulars. This is because particulars are visible, changing, and dissolvable, while both Forms and the soul are invisible, unchanging, and noncomposite. The initial Claim of the argument is that because Forms are unchanging (and therefore ‘immortal’), souls must also be immortal (proposition 6). The AA goes on, however, past this initial Claim that

the soul is immortal, to then argue that the philosophical soul is drawn to the divine and unchanging when the body dies, and therefore the philosopher should not fear death (proposition 10). Just like the AGH and the CRA, the AA uses facts about the Forms as one of its highest Backings, and it concludes that the soul is immortal (proposition 6, its initial Claim). However, one thing that differentiates the AA from other arguments for immortality (CRA and FA in particular) is that it continues its argument even after it has concluded that the soul is immortal. It contains assertions about what sorts of things happen to the soul after the body's death (propositions 7-10), in order to make a final Claim that the philosopher should not fear death (proposition 10).

Just like the AGH and CRA, the AA has only a probable conclusion, but in this argument, the first instance of its probability comes from the analogous nature of the argument. The AA relies entirely on the idea that there is an affinity between the soul and things in the realm of Forms (proposition 5); if this is not true, then no true conclusions can be drawn from the argument. And it is precisely this affinity between the soul and the Forms that Simmias and Cebes object to. In fact, both of them use the same basic analogical structure to raise Rebuttals to the AA, by replacing Socrates' analogy with their own. First, Simmias argues that the soul may be more like a harmony, in which case the soul would be destroyed upon the destruction of its instrument, the body¹⁰⁹; then Cebes argues that if the soul is like a man and the body like his clothing, the soul may grow damaged over time and die, even if it has outlived many iterations of its clothing (88a-b). It thus seems that Simmias and Cebes object to the idea that the soul is most equal to things in the realm of Forms—that is, the Warrant to the initial Claim, proposition 5—rather than to Socrates'

¹⁰⁹ Simmias suggests: “Then if it happens that the soul is some harmony, it is clear that, whenever our body is slackened or tightened beyond proportion by sickness or other evils, it is necessary that the soul begin to be completely destroyed straightaway, even if it is most divine” (εἰ οὖν τυγχάνει ἡ ψυχὴ οὕσα ἁρμονία τις, δῆλον ὅτι, ὅταν χαλασθῇ τὸ σῶμα ἡμῶν ἀμέτρως ἢ ἐπιταθῇ ὑπὸ νόσων καὶ ἄλλων κακῶν, τὴν μὲν ψυχὴν ἀνάγκη εὐθὺς ἀπολωλέναι, καίπερ οὕσαν θειοτάτην, 86c3-6).

Backings for this Warrant (propositions 1, 3, and 4, which regard the nature of Forms, particulars, and the soul). In fact, Simmias, at least, agrees *explicitly* with the Backings for Socrates' argument when making his own analogy of the soul as a harmony, agreeing that the soul is indeed more like something "invisible and bodiless and something entirely good and divine" (ἀόρατον καὶ ἀσώματον καὶ πάγκαλόν τι καὶ θεῖόν, 85e5-86a1), while the body is more like something "bodily and material and composite and akin to the mortal" (σώματά τε καὶ σωματοειδῆ καὶ σύνθετα καὶ γεώδη ... καὶ τοῦ θνητοῦ συγγενῆ, 86a2-3). In the AA, then, we see that at least one of Socrates' interlocutors has come to agree on the Backings to Socrates' argument, even if he does not yet agree that these Backings support the Claim that the soul is immortal.

We should note, however, that Socrates does not believe Simmias' and Cebes' Rebuttals are correct. He gives explicit arguments against their conceptions of the soul just afterward, insisting that the analogies they provide are inadequate on various grounds. This means that for *Socrates*, the only part of the AA that seems probable is what comes *after* his initial Claim that the soul is immortal (propositions 7-10). Because Socrates does not see his initial Claim as probable, only his final Claim that the philosopher should not fear death is governed by probability, in his view. The propositions leading to this final Claim all make assertions about what the soul experiences after death, whereas his earlier propositions led to the initial Claim only *that* the soul is immortal. As we will see in sections 2.3 and 3.2, Socrates believes he can "prove" *that* the soul is immortal (the initial Claim of the AA), but he hesitates to make such strong claims about what the soul experiences after death (the final Claim of the AA).

Still, by the end of the AA, Simmias, at least, is explicitly willing to accept the Backing about the nature of the Forms that Socrates uses here (and, in fact, in all of his arguments in *Phaedo*). It seems clear to Socrates that these facts about the Forms and about the soul lead one to

see an affinity between the two, but Simmias and Cebes still do not understand this. They accept what Socrates says about the nature of the Forms, yet they do not understand the nature of the soul well enough to see their similarity. Still, Socrates seems to have made some progress in persuading his interlocutors, because they are now readily accepting the nature of the Forms, the Backing to all of his arguments, and are even using it in their own arguments.

2.2.3 The Final Argument (FA)

In the Final Argument, Socrates again relies on the Forms as the Backing for his argument. He argues that things that have an opposite by nature can never admit of what is opposite to their nature, e.g., snow can never admit of heat because it is cold by nature, and cold the opposite of heat. Because of this, and because the soul is the source of life, the soul cannot admit of the opposite of life (death), so the soul must be immortal. Just like all of Socrates' previous arguments, the FA has as its Backing facts about the existence and nature of the realm of Forms: the fact that Forms do not admit of their opposites serves as Backing for the Warrant that things which contain an opposite by their very nature will not admit of what is opposite to their natures.

(1) Forms don't admit their opposites. (103b)

The Final Argument (FA): 102b-107a

(2) Just as opposites do not admit their opposites, things that have an opposite by nature don't admit their opposites. (104b)

(4) Life is the opposite of death. (105d)

(6) What is deathless is indestructible. (106c-d)

(3) Soul is the source of life. (105c)

(5) The soul does not admit death (i.e., it is deathless). (105e)

(7) Soul is indestructible (i.e., immortal). (106e)

Figure 8

FA Propositions

1. “Now [we are saying] that an opposite itself could not ever come to be opposite to itself” (νῦν δέ, ὅτι αὐτὸ τὸ ἐναντίον ἑαυτῷ ἐναντίον οὐκ ἂν ποτε γένοιτο, 103b4-5; cf. 103c, 104c).
2. “It seems that not only those opposites do not admit of one another, but also those things which, [although] not being opposite one another, [nevertheless] always have the opposites...” (φαίνεται οὐ μόνον ἐκεῖνα τὰ ἐναντία ἀλλήλα οὐ δεχόμενα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσα οὐκ ὄντ’ ἀλλήλοις ἐναντία ἔχει ἀεὶ τὰναντία... 104b7-9; cf. 104c).
3. Socrates: “Then whatever soul itself occupies, it always comes upon that thing bringing life?” Cebes: “Indeed it brings [life].” (ψυχὴ ἄρα ὅτι ἂν αὐτὴ κατάσχη, ἀεὶ ἥκει ἐπ’ ἐκεῖνο φέρουσα ζωὴν; Cebes: ἥκει μέντοι, 105d3-4).
4. Socrates: “Is there some opposite to life or none?” Cebes: “...Death.” (Socrates: πότερον δ’ ἔστι τι ζωῆς ἐναντίον ἢ οὐδέν; Cebes: ...θάνατος, 105d6, 9).
5. “Then the soul does not admit of death?” (οὐκοῦν ψυχὴ οὐ δέχεται θάνατον; 105e4).

6. “Then also now about what is deathless—if it is agreed by us that it is also indestructible, the soul would be, from its deathlessness, also indestructible?” (οὐκοῦν καὶ νῦν περὶ τοῦ ἀθανάτου, εἰ μὲν ἡμῖν ὁμολογεῖται καὶ ἀνώλεθρον εἶναι, ψυχὴ ἂν εἴη πρὸς τῷ ἀθάνατος εἶναι καὶ ἀνώλεθρος: 106c9-d1; cf. 106 d-e).

7. “Rather the soul is deathless entirely and indestructible, and in reality our souls are in Hades” (παντὸς μᾶλλον ἄρα, ... ψυχὴ ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον, καὶ τῷ ὄντι ἔσονται ἡμῶν αἱ ψυχαὶ ἐν ᾗιδου, 106e8-107a1).

In the Final Argument (FA), Socrates again begins with a Backing about the Forms, this time, that they do not admit their opposites (proposition 1). He uses it to derive the principle that some things that contain an opposite by their nature (for instance, the cold in snow that is the opposite of heat) also cannot admit what is opposite to their natures (proposition 2). Since soul is the source of life (proposition 3) and life is the opposite of death (proposition 4), the soul must be deathless and indestructible (propositions 5-7). In other words, even when a body dies, the soul attached to it is incapable of admitting what is its own opposite, death, and must flee from the death in the body.

Compared to the other arguments in *Phaedo*, the FA is strikingly free of hedging, probability, or other forms of Rebuttal. Socrates takes it to be clearly true that if the nature of the Forms is as he claims—in particular, that they cannot admit their opposites—then the deathlessness, indestructibility, and immortality of the soul follow quite quickly and clearly from this Backing (proposition 1). Socrates even gets Cebes to admit that Socrates has “proven” with

this argument that the soul is immortal,¹¹⁰ and both Simmias and Cebes acknowledge that they have no more logical objections to the argument. Despite this, Simmias still cannot bring himself to be persuaded:

I myself do not still disbelieve in any way the things that have been argued: however, from the magnitude [of the topic] about which the arguments were, and not underestimating human weakness, I am forced still to hold disbelief by myself about the things that have been said.

οὐδ' αὐτὸς ἔχω ἔτι ὅπῃ ἀπιστῶ ἔκ γε τῶν λεγομένων: ὑπὸ μέντοι τοῦ μεγέθους περὶ ὧν οἱ λόγοι εἰσίν, καὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἀσθένειαν ἀτιμάζων, ἀναγκάζομαι ἀπιστίαν ἔτι ἔχειν παρ' ἐμαυτῷ περὶ τῶν εἰρημένων. (107a8-3b)

Even though Socrates has addressed all of Simmias' and Cebes' logical and argumentative objections to the soul's immortality, his interlocutors remain unpersuaded. So Socrates decides to try to persuade them through less traditional means—by telling them a myth about the afterlife—which is analyzed below in section 2.4. First, however, in order to see how Socrates constructs this myth out of the conclusions (Claims) to his previous arguments and how this myth follows a rational progression from those arguments, section 2.3 will analyze how Socrates has been Backing each of his arguments so far with an unproven “hypothesis” about the nature of the Forms.

2.3 The Hypothesis of the Forms as Backing

In each of the argument analyses above, either the existence of the Forms or some particular fact about the Forms is used as a Backing for the rest of the argument. This can be easily seen through the Toulmin analyses because these Backings are all located on the highest level of the

¹¹⁰ Socrates says: “Should we say it has been proven?” And Cebes agrees: “Quite sufficiently.” (Soc: ἀποδεδεῖχθαι φῶμεν; Cebes: καὶ μάλα γε ἱκανῶς, 105e8-9).

diagrams, and they are located to the left of any arrows indicating inference. This means that these Backings about the Forms are not justified by any higher Backings, and they are left unproven. Of course, it is no coincidence that facts about the Forms serve as Backing for each argument when analyzed through the Toulmin method, because Socrates states explicitly that he uses the Forms as a hypothesis on which to base his inquiries and arguments:

...[H]aving hypothesized in each case the account which I judge to be strongest, those things which seem to me to be in harmony with this, I set down as true, both about causes and about all other things; while those which do not seem to be in harmony, I set down as not true. ...[H]ypothesizing that there is some beautiful, itself by itself, and some good and some great and all the others...
...ὑποθέμενος ἐκάστοτε λόγον ὃν ἂν κρίνω ἐρρωμενέστατον εἶναι, ἃ μὲν ἂν μοι δοκῇ τούτῳ συμφωνεῖν τίθημι ὡς ἀληθῆ ὄντα, καὶ περὶ αἰτίας καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων ὄντων, ἃ δ' ἂν μὴ, ὡς οὐκ ἀληθῆ. ... ὑποθέμενος εἶναί τι καλὸν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ μέγα καὶ ἄλλα πάντα... (100a3-6, 100b5-7)

Socrates means that he uses the hypothesis that he has found to be “strongest” in order to judge the truth of other propositions: those that are in harmony with it, he will (at least tentatively) accept as true, while those that are not in harmony, he considers (at least tentatively) false. This “strongest” hypothesis is, he says, the hypothesis of the Forms, a hypothesis that he is most sure of, and one from which he cannot easily be swayed (cf. 100d, 101d). Because he is confident that the hypothesis of the Forms is correct, he believes also that arguments that are in harmony with this hypothesis are most likely correct. This is not to say that Socrates believes his interlocutors should accept this hypothesis without question; rather, he specifically encourages Simmias to continue to question the hypothesis of the Forms, even after he has given all of the arguments above:

You say rightly that the first hypotheses, even if they are believable to us, nevertheless are to be examined more clearly: and if you divide them sufficiently, as I think, you will follow the argument, down as far as absolutely possible for a man to pursue: and should this very thing become sure, you would seek nothing further.

εὖ λέγεις καὶ τάς γε ὑποθέσεις τὰς πρώτας, καὶ εἰ πισταὶ ὑμῖν εἰσιν, ὅμως ἐπισκεπτέαι σαφέστερον: καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὰς ἱκανῶς διέλῃτε, ὡς ἐγὼμαι, ἀκολουθήσετε τῷ λόγῳ, καθ' ὅσον δυνατόν μάλιστ' ἀνθρώπῳ ἐπακολουθήσαι: κἂν τοῦτο αὐτὸ σαφὲς γένηται, οὐδὲν ζητήσετε περαιτέρω. (107b5-9)

The hypothesis of the Forms is so secure for Socrates, presumably because he has put it under scrutiny for many years, that he is confident that Simmias, too, will continue to accept the hypothesis even after he has scrutinized it for himself. In fact, all of the arguments for immortality in *Phaedo* are in some sense a ‘following down’ of what is in harmony with the Forms—specifically, how the soul’s immortality is in harmony with them. Each of these arguments uses the hypothesis of the Forms as Backing to argue that the soul is immortal. It seems almost as though Socrates believes that the soul’s immortality is directly inferrable from facts about the nature of the Forms. Socrates himself sees this from the beginning of the dialogue, and thus his first argument, the AGH, does not specifically address the immortality of the soul, but rather assumes that the soul is immortal. And this makes sense for Socrates, because he sees many ways that if one ‘follows down’ an argument from the hypothesis of the Forms, this leads to the hypothesis that the soul is immortal. Only once Simmias and Cebes object that the soul might *not* be immortal does Socrates address the immortality of the soul directly.

If the arguments in *Phaedo* show what is in harmony with the Forms, they also examine the hypothesis of the Forms itself. Socrates says that hypotheses are to be “examined more clearly” by “follow[ing] the argument, down as far as absolutely possible for a man to pursue” (107b, qtd. in previous paragraph). In essence, that is what each of Socrates’ arguments for immortality does, because each demonstrates what propositions can follow from the hypothesis of the Forms. In fact, as Socrates progresses through his arguments in *Phaedo*, the ‘amount’ of likelihood or probability in each argument is slightly less (i.e., the level of certainty is greater) than in earlier arguments, which suggests that his interlocutors can be more and more assured of the truth of each argument.

Socrates' first argument, the AGH, has three 'points of entry' of likelihood or probability (propositions 2, 8, and 10), while the CRA has two,¹¹¹ the AA has one (proposition 9 in), and the FA has none.¹¹² This suggests that each of Socrates' arguments becomes—or at least *should* become, for those who are following the arguments rightly—more and more firm, as we can become more and more sure that these arguments are based on a well-examined hypothesis. In addition, the 'entry points' for probability show a general shift further to the right and further down in the Toulmin diagrams as Socrates progresses through his arguments, which indicates that the 'mere' probability enters at a later stage of each argument. In other words, the probability of Socrates' arguments moves further and further away from the hypothesis of the Forms as the dialogue progresses. Each argument demonstrates a different way that the immortality of the soul follows from the hypothesis of the Forms, giving greater and greater assurance in that hypothesis as the 'mere likelihood' of the hypothesis begins to disappear. As we 'follow the argument[s] down' to the Claim that the soul is immortal, we can be more sure both of this conclusion and of the hypothesis of the Forms that is its Backing.

¹¹¹ These are at proposition 8 in both the CA and the RA diagrams. See Appendix A for the diagram and citations.

¹¹² I am here listing only instances of probability or Rebuttals that Socrates appears to take seriously, which means that I am excluding the idea that knowledge may not be attainable at all (AGH proposition 9), and Simmias' and Cebes' attempted Rebuttals to the affinity between the soul and the Forms (AA proposition 11). If I included these in the overall 'tally' of 'likelihood' for the arguments, the general pattern of the arguments becoming less and less probable and more and more sure would still hold, although admittedly, slightly less tidily in terms of numbers alone.

2.4 The Argument in the Myth

After all of these arguments for the immortality of the soul, Simmias and Cebes ought to be persuaded. They have examined the hypothesis of the Forms and found that in many different ways, it leads to the conclusion that the soul is immortal. Still, something not quite logical is holding Simmias back. Since Simmias has no more logical objections, Socrates can no longer try to persuade him using propositional arguments; instead, he gives a myth that, while making a rational progression, also is intended to address Simmias' fears and reservations about the fate of the soul after death. He describes how souls are judged, purged of their wickedness, and rewarded for their virtues. It is a hopeful myth, which Socrates emphasizes at the end (114c-e), both for Socrates' present situation and for his friends, if they are inspired to live their lives pursuing wisdom and virtue.

Having shown the soul to be immortal through his previous arguments, Socrates now uses this proposition in the myth without further justification, in order to show that one should spend one's life trying to become "as excellent and as prudent as possible" (ὥς βελτίστην τε καὶ φρονιμωτάτην, 107d1-2). He introduces the myth by calling attention to the proposition on which it is based: "But it is just to keep this in mind, that, *since indeed the soul is deathless*, it is necessary to [give it] care not only for this time that we call living, but for all time..." (proposition 3, below). In this way, Socrates makes clear that he is basing the myth on the Claim of the previous arguments (the conclusion that the soul is immortal), and that the myth does not argue *for* the immortality of the soul, but rather argues about what happens to souls in the afterlife—*given that* the soul is immortal:

The Myth: 107c-115a

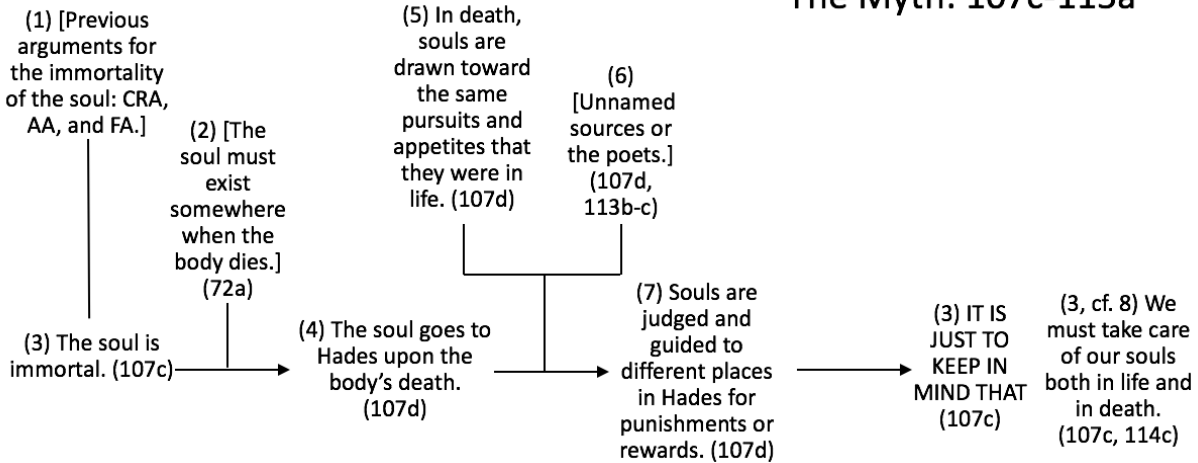


Figure 9

Propositions in the Myth

1. Socrates' three previous arguments (CRA, AA, and FA) argued that the soul is immortal.
2. This is proposition 8 in the CA section of the CRA (72a6-8), quoted in full in Appendix A.
3. Both the Claim from the previous arguments and the hypothesis that introduces the myth: “But it is just to keep this in mind, that, since indeed the soul is deathless, it is necessary to [give it] care not only for this time that we call living, but for all time...” (ἀλλὰ τόδε γ’... δίκαιον διανοηθῆναι, ὅτι, εἴπερ ἡ ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος, ἐπιμελείας δὴ δεῖται οὐχ ὑπὲρ τοῦ χρόνου τούτου μόνον ἐν ᾧ καλοῦμεν τὸ ζῆν, ἀλλ’ ὑπὲρ τοῦ παντός..., 107c1-4).
4. “...The soul goes to Hades...” (...εἰς Ἄιδου ἡ ψυχὴ ἔρχεται..., 107d3).
5. Suggested by, e.g., “For the soul goes to Hades holding on to nothing other than its education and nurture, which are said most of all to aid or to harm immediately upon dying, in the beginning of the journey to that place” (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο ἔχουσα εἰς Ἄιδου ἡ ψυχὴ ἔρχεται πλὴν τῆς παιδείας τε καὶ τροφῆς, ἃ δὴ καὶ μέγιστα λέγεται ὠφελεῖν ἢ βλάπτειν τὸν τελευτήσαντα εὐθὺς ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς ἐκεῖσε πορείας, 107d2-5).

6. Regarding the judgment of souls: “...which *are said* most of all to aid or to harm immediately upon dying...” (...ἃ δὴ καὶ μέγιστα λέγεται ὠφελεῖν ἢ βλάπτειν τὸν τελευτήσαντα εὐθὺς..., 107d4-5); “*It is said* thus...” (λέγεται δὲ οὕτως, 107d5). Regarding the geography of Hades: “...as *it is said*” (ὥς λέγεται, 113b8); “...as the *poets say*...” (ὥς οἱ ποιηταὶ λέγουσιν, 113c8-9).
7. “It is necessary that they, having submitted themselves for judgment, be brought into Hades...” (δεῖ τοὺς ... διαδικασαμένους εἰς Ἅιδου πορεύεσθαι, 107d8-e1).
8. “But on account of these things which we have recounted, it is necessary, Simmias, to do everything in order to have a share of virtue and wisdom in life: for the reward is beautiful and the hope vast” (ἀλλὰ τούτων δὴ ἕνεκα χρὴ ὧν διεληλύθαμεν, ὦ Σιμμία, πᾶν ποιεῖν ὥστε ἀρετῆς καὶ φρονήσεως ἐν τῷ βίῳ μετασχεῖν: καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἄθλον καὶ ἡ ἐλπὶς μεγάλη, 114c6-9).

It is perhaps notable that the ‘details’ in Socrates’ myth are not in the diagram, details such as the geography of Hades or the shape and colors of the earth. This is because these are not essential to the underlying argumentative structure of the myth, so they need not be included in a Toulmin analysis. More importantly, though, Socrates himself says that the myth is not to be taken entirely literally,¹¹³ which suggests that these specific details may not be essential to the myth, or even accurate. He says explicitly that he will not be able to give a full account of what he will claim in the myth, nor that he will even be able to fully explain the truth of the matter.¹¹⁴ Knowing

¹¹³ The non-literal nature of the myth is of particular importance here. Socrates certainly seems to mean that souls live on after the body’s death, that they are judged after death, and that they are treated differently in the afterlife in accordance with this judgment. However, he does not seem to mean that Hades must have the specific number of paths or rivers he cites, or that the earth is necessarily divided into twelve differently colored regions. These details help make the myth persuasive and help to lend authority to the myth, so in terms of their persuasive function, they are of utmost importance (see section 4.4). However, these details could be replaced with other similar details, and the myth could still have the same or a quite similar meaning. I argue in 5.1.3 that this is the case with a few different eschatological myths that Socrates tells. See also 4.4 on how the details help to make myths persuasive.

¹¹⁴ Socrates says: “It doesn’t seem to me to be [a matter for] the skill of Glaucus to fully describe what [the soul and the earth] are; to show that these things are true, though, appears to me to be more difficult than the skill of Glaucus.

the truth and giving a full account of the fate of the soul after death would require superhuman knowledge. Still, because the myth is based on his previous arguments—and thus based on the hypothesis of the Forms—he is confident that the basic argumentative structure of the myth will be no less worthy of belief than his prior arguments were:

To affirm these things confidently in exactly the way I have explained is not proper to a man having reason; but indeed [to affirm] these things or such things about our souls... seems proper to me.

τὸ μὲν οὖν ταῦτα δισχυρίσασθαι οὕτως ἔχειν ὥς ἐγὼ διελήλυθα, οὐ πρέπει νοῦν ἔχοντι ἀνδρί: ὅτι μέντοι ἢ ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ἢ τοιαῦτ' ἅττα περὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν... τοῦτο καὶ πρέπει μοι δοκεῖ. (114d1-3, 4-5)

Because the myth is built on a hypothesis that is firm and secure for Socrates, he is comfortable saying that it ‘*seems proper*’ ‘to affirm these things *or such things*.’ Socrates needn’t know the exact geography of Hades in order to be convinced that souls are treated variously in the afterlife, in accordance with their virtues and vices in life, nor does he need to know exactly how that judgment works in order to be convinced that one ought to pursue wisdom and virtue in life. The moral Claim (conclusion) that one must pursue wisdom and virtue in life will be true even if some of the details in the myth are not literally true. The myth has as its Backing the same hypothesis as all of Socrates’ other arguments, and thus has no less sure a foundation than the arguments Socrates states in propositional language.¹¹⁵

And I might not be able to, but also, even if I knew, my life seems to be not sufficient in length for the account.” (οὐχ ἡ Γλαύκου τέχνη γέ μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι διηγήσασθαι ἃ γ' ἐστίν: ὥς μέντοι ἀληθῆ, χαλεπώτερόν μοι φαίνεται ἢ κατὰ τὴν Γλαύκου τέχνην, καὶ ἅμα μὲν ἐγὼ ἴσως οὐδ' ἂν οἷός τε εἶην, ἅμα δέ, εἰ καὶ ἠπιστάμην, ὁ βίος μοι δοκεῖ ὁ ἐμός... τῷ μήκει τοῦ λόγου οὐκ ἐξαρκεῖν, 108d). This passage is discussed at length in 3.2.6.

¹¹⁵ A few scholars have also noted that many of Plato’s myths are based on hypotheses that he has presented or argued for in propositional language such as dialectic (Morgan, Burnyeat, Trabattoni); however, these scholars tend to mention this fact only in passing. Morgan, for instance, says that “Myth has, therefore, an *association* with the hypotheses that must be subjected to rational inquiry at the beginning of the philosophical enterprise,” but she does not investigate this ‘association’ further (239, emphasis mine). Trabattoni makes a similarly vague claim: “The truth of the myth *is linked to* the truth of the dialectic demonstration whence the myth draws its thrust, it being understood that this very truth is not completely beyond doubt” (321, emphasis mine). I take him to here be referring to an unproven hypothesis or axiom.

This is not to say, however, that the myth argues nothing new in the context of the dialogue. It might be suspected that Socrates' myth is a re-telling of the AGH, since they both make claims about the nature and journey of the soul after death without explicitly arguing for the immortality of the soul; however, the AGH and the myth focus on different aspects of the afterlife, and therefore draw different, though certainly compatible, conclusions. The AGH discusses the fate of the soul after death in terms of its *intellectual* capacities, claiming that true knowledge is most available to a discarnate soul in this state, and concluding that neither should the philosopher fear death, nor his friends mourn his death. The myth, on the other hand, focuses on the fate of the soul in terms of punishments and rewards for *moral* choices it made while living. Its conclusion is that not only should one pursue wisdom in life so that one is best prepared for death, but also that one should pursue *virtue* so that one can have the most pleasant experience after death: "But on account of those things we have detailed, it is necessary to do everything so as to share in virtue and wisdom in life; for the reward is beautiful, and the hope great" (ἀλλὰ τούτων δὴ ἔνεκα χρὴ ὧν διεληλύθαμεν ... πᾶν ποιεῖν ὥστε ἀρετῆς καὶ φρονήσεως ἐν τῷ βίῳ μετασχεῖν: καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἄθλον καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς μεγάλη, 114c6-9). The myth, then, arrives at a different Claim (conclusion) from the other arguments in the dialogue, one with a uniquely moral character. It uses Socrates' previous arguments as its Backing (and thus uses the hypothesis of the Forms as Backing), but its final Claim is distinct from what Socrates has previously argued: it makes a *moral* argument that one must pursue virtue and wisdom.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have aimed to show how throughout *Phaedo*, Socrates bases his arguments on the hypothesis of the Forms, and how he indicates that we can be more and more sure of his conclusions with each argument. With each new argument, Socrates gives fewer and fewer indications that the argument is merely ‘likely’ or ‘probable,’ suggesting that he believes his interlocutors should have more and more confidence in his arguments and his conclusions. Because Socrates uses the hypothesis of the Forms as the Backing for each of these arguments, each argument is not only an argument for the immortality of the soul but also an ‘examination,’ as Socrates says, of the hypothesis of the Forms itself. In giving each argument, Socrates invites his interlocutors to examine the hypothesis of Forms by following the hypothesis down to its consequences, which should allow them to develop greater trust in the hypothesis. Once Socrates’ interlocutors have no more logically-based objections to the hypothesis, yet they are still unpersuaded, Socrates uses the same hypothesis to develop a myth, which is intended both to function as a rational argument and to provide both rational and non-rational persuasive appeals.¹¹⁶ In addition, its logical progression from the previous arguments, as well as its reliance on the Forms for its Backing,¹¹⁷ rules out the possibility that the myth is entirely non-rational, or that it is non-argumentative discourse.

In the following chapters, I analyze these various functions of the myth and how they are similar or dissimilar to the functions of the arguments given in propositional language. Chapter 3

¹¹⁶ This claim is elaborated upon and argued for in 3.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

¹¹⁷ The diagram does not include the full Backing for the myth, in order to make it most readable. However, as proposition 1 indicates, the myth uses the previous arguments for the immortality of the soul (CRA, AA, and FA) as one of its Warrants, and therefore uses all the propositions in those arguments as its Backings. The highest of these, in each argument, is the hypothesis of the Forms.

develops the preliminary argument from this Chapter that the myth is a rational argument, by comparing the demonstrative status Socrates affords it to those of the propositional arguments. And in Chapter 4, the rational and non-rational persuasive functions of the myth are analyzed in order to show which persuasive functions the myth shares with the propositional arguments and which are unique to the myth.

Chapter 3

Chapter 2 argued for a somewhat novel approach to analyzing the arguments in *Phaedo*, both in terms of understanding the role of the Argument for Great Hope (AGH) in the progression of the arguments in the dialogue, and in terms of analyzing the arguments through the Toulmin model in order to better see the Backings of each argument. The following chapter builds on this analysis by drawing out the demonstrative status of each argument and the myth, as well as by showing that the arguments that use the proposition that the soul is immortal as a Backing have a lower demonstrative status than those that use it as a Claim (conclusion).

My overall aim in the present chapter is to analyze the vocabulary Socrates uses to describe the ‘action’ of each of the arguments and the myth in *Phaedo*, such as whether the argument ‘proves,’ ‘shows,’ or makes only ‘likely’ Claims, in order to determine what I will call the “demonstrative status” of each argument and of the myth. In Section 3.2, I argue that the discriminating feature for whether Socrates calls an argument a ‘proof’ is whether it argues *only* that the soul is immortal, or whether it elaborates on the details of what happens to the soul after death. Arguments that argue only that the soul is immortal (CRA and FA) are said to have ‘proven’ this fact, while arguments that elaborate on the fate of the soul after death (AGH, AA, the myth) cannot be considered proofs, because the fate of the soul after death cannot be known or proven. This means that the CRA and FA have the higher demonstrative status of a proof, while the AGH, AA, and myth have demonstrative statuses lower than that of a proof. However, because the AA has a unique structure (discussed in section 2.2.2), its demonstrative status is higher than the AGH and the myth. This creates a chiasmic structure to the demonstrative statuses of the arguments, with the first and fifth arguments (AGH and myth) having the lowest status, the second and fourth

arguments (CRA and FA) having the highest status, and the middle argument (AA) having a status between the others. In section 3.2, I argue that the reason Socrates believes he can prove the immortality of the soul but not specifics about the afterlife is because he believes that the ‘highest’ hypothesis, the hypothesis of the Forms, provides grounds for proving that the soul is immortal. Arguments about what the soul experiences after the body’s death, however, are based on the ‘lower’ hypothesis that the soul is immortal, so they cannot have the higher demonstrative status granted to arguments based on the higher hypothesis of the Forms. However, because this is a consistent pattern no matter what form Socrates’ arguments take—be they deductive, analogical, or mythological—there is no reason to think that the myth of the dialogue has a lower demonstrative status because of its mythological language. Rather, the myth has a lower demonstrative status only because it is based on the lower hypothesis that the soul is immortal.

3.1 The Demonstrative Status of the Arguments

Statements about the demonstrative status of each argument in *Phaedo* are complicated by the fact that Socrates and his interlocutors declare arguments to have been ‘shown’ or ‘proven’ at differing times, as well as the fact that Simmias and Cebes are still not convinced by some of Socrates’ arguments even once they themselves declare the arguments to have been proven. Some of these issues will be dealt with in Chapter 4, which focuses on the persuasive nature of the arguments. For now, my focus will be on the language Socrates uses to describe the demonstrative status of each argument—that is, what he says will be or has been proven, shown, demonstrated, and the like. Socrates uses a constellation of terminology to describe the demonstrative statuses of

his various arguments, and furthermore, he often uses a number of different terms to describe each argument individually, so it seems counterproductive to attempt to rank each term he uses in a rigid framework. Instead, I will claim only that what Socrates says he “proves” (ἀποδείκνυμι) has the highest status, while other terms such as φράζω, δείκνυμι, and σημαίνω indicate somewhat lower statuses, and terms such as ἔοικα and its cognates even lower than those. In general, I will take each argument to have the status indicated by the ‘highest’ demonstrative term Socrates uses to describe it, unless there is a clear reason in the text to indicate another interpretation.

3.1.1 The Argument for Great Hope (AGH)

In the Argument for Great Hope (AGH), Socrates uses the hypothesis of the Forms as Backing to argue that because knowledge is best acquired without bodily distractions, he has “great hope” that he and others who practice philosophy rightly will gain knowledge after death. Even though Socrates’ argument is steeped in language of hopefulness, both this (mere) hopefulness and his repeated characterizations of the argument as “likely” or “fitting” suggest that the AGH has one of the lowest demonstrative statuses of any argument in the dialogue.

Socrates introduces this argument in rather uncertain terms, suggesting immediately that the demonstrative status of the argument is rather low. Socrates cannot guarantee to his interlocutors that what he is about to tell them is true, he says, yet he is hopeful in the face of his own impending death:

Well then, I should try to speak a *more persuasive* defense to you than to the judges.
... Now, though, know well that *I hope* to arrive [at a place] among good men—
and this is not [something which] I would affirm entirely confidently—[but] know well that if indeed I would affirm confidently something else among such things, it

would be this: that I will be in the presence of gods, entirely good masters. ...*I am hopeful* that there is something for those who have died...

φέρει δὲ, ...πειραθῶ πιθανώτερον πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἀπολογήσασθαι ἢ πρὸς τοὺς δικαστάς. ... νῦν δὲ εὖ ἴστε ὅτι παρ' ἀνδρας τε ἐλπίζω ἀφίξεσθαι ἀγαθοὺς—καὶ τοῦτο μὲν οὐκ ἂν πάνυ δυσχυρισαίμην—ὅτι μέντοι παρὰ θεοὺς δεσπότας πάνυ ἀγαθοὺς ἥξειν, εὖ ἴστε ὅτι εἴπερ τι ἄλλο τῶν τοιούτων δυσχυρισαίμην ἂν καὶ τοῦτο. ...εὐελπίς εἰμι εἶναι τι τοῖς τετελευτηκόσι... (63b4-5, b9-c6)

Socrates is hopeful—he says twice—that there is something after death and that his soul will be among those of good men and gods, and he wants to persuade his interlocutors of the same. He does not say he will demonstrate or prove this, and in fact, he won't even 'affirm' it 'entirely confidently.' Of course, Socrates would not be able to demonstrate or prove the AGH beyond a doubt, because the fate of the soul after death is beyond the realm of human knowledge. Still, this introduction to the argument suggests *some* confidence on Socrates' part; he *is* willing to affirm confidently that he will be in the presence of gods when he dies, and he hopes to persuade his interlocutors of this:

But to you, the judges, I wish now to deliver the account, how *it seems to me fitting* that a man who has truly spent his life in philosophy should be of good courage when he is about to die, and [how] he is hopeful that there, he will bear the greatest goods, when he has died. How in fact this should be so, I will attempt to show.

ἀλλ' ὑμῖν δὲ τοῖς δικασταῖς βούλομαι ἤδη τὸν λόγον ἀποδοῦναι, ὥς μοι φαίνεται εἰκότως ἀνὴρ τῷ ὄντι ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ διατρίψας τὸν βίον θαρρεῖν μέλλων ἀποθανεῖσθαι καὶ εὐελπίς εἶναι ἐκεῖ μέγιστα οἶσεσθαι ἀγαθὰ ἐπειδὴν τελευτήσῃ. πῶς ἂν οὖν δὴ τοῦθ' οὕτως ἔχοι, ...ἐγὼ πειράσομαι φράσαι. (63e8-64a3)

“It seems fitting,”¹¹⁸ Socrates says—and not a guarantee—that a philosopher should not fear death.

But again, as in the passage above (63b-c), Socrates is hopeful: a philosopher should “be of good courage” (θαρρεῖν) and “hopeful” (εὐελπίς) about the fate of his soul after death. The verb that Socrates uses when saying he will attempt “to show” (φράσαι) his conclusion generally means not

¹¹⁸ The term εἰκότως, an adverb formed from the perfect participle of εἶκομαι, will remind readers familiar with *Timaeus* of the lively and still-active debates surrounding the interpretation of this and related terms. See in particular Brisson 2012 and Burnyeat 2009. Here I translate this adverbial form in the sense of “suitably, fairly, reasonably,” or, when paired with ἔχει or δοκεῖ, “it is reasonable” or “it seems reasonable” (*LSJ* A).

to prove or demonstrate but to ‘point out,’ ‘show,’ ‘show the way to’ (*LSJ* A), or to ‘tell,’ ‘declare,’ ‘explain,’ or ‘signify’ (*LSJ* A2). He strengthens this language, however, once he has finished presenting the argument, when he declares that “it has really been demonstrated” (τῷ ὄντι δέδεικται) that true knowledge comes only to souls unencumbered by bodies (66d7). The verb δείκνυμι already has a stronger connotation of demonstration than φράζω, typically meaning to ‘bring to light’ or ‘show forth’ (*LSJ* A), and this particular use is glossed by *LSJ* as “it is clear” or even “it is proven” (A4). “It has really been demonstrated,” then, for Socrates, that souls thirsting for knowledge must separate themselves from concerns of the body as much as possible.

The final conclusion to Socrates’ argument is given in slightly weaker terms, and though he continues to characterize the argument as “likely” or “fitting” throughout, he also continues to insist that he is right to be “hopeful.” Socrates declares that “the argument shows” (ὁ λόγος σημαίνει, 66e4) that knowledge can come only when a soul is not in a living body. Of course, σημαίνω can range in meaning from signaling to sail or attack (*LSJ* II.2), to how a word relates to its referent or a sentence to the proposition it expresses (III.3), to how the Delphic Oracle or an omen expresses its meaning (A3).¹¹⁹ It would thus seem that Socrates means his argument *shows* or *signifies* that the soul can gain knowledge after the body’s death, rather than that he has proven this. As he continues to discuss this conclusion to his argument, he characterizes it and its consequences as “fitting,” rather than as claims to truth or knowledge about the matter (ὥς ἔοικεν, 66e1-2; ὥς ἔοικεν, 67a2; ὥς τὸ εἰκὸς, 67a7). Again, he echoes the hopeful language he used earlier, saying that there is “great hope” (πολλὴ ἐλπίς, 67b8) that his soul will gain knowledge in the

¹¹⁹ See Struck for an in-depth analysis of this term and related ones. Although his text focuses on other authors more than it does on Platonic texts, he does note that Plato in particular seems to struggle with the idea that all language is a mere σημεῖον, easily capable of distracting from what *is* and leading us astray (54). In this particular use, however, Plato does not seem to insinuate that the λόγος has led us astray, but rather pointed toward some truth that may not have been perfectly expressed by his language.

afterlife, and that his “departure is accompanied by good hope” (ἀποδημία... μετὰ ἀγαθῆς ἐλπίδος γίγνεται, 67c1-2) because he has dedicated his life to philosophy. While Socrates’ language is certainly meant to be encouraging, he is not claiming that the AGH has a particularly high demonstrative status. Socrates is asking his interlocutors to believe his claims about the afterlife without proof, because he can give no proof. He closes his argument by reminding his interlocutors of this:

Whether I have shown zeal rightly and we have accomplished anything, we will know the clear facts [only once] we have gone there [to Hades]... So then, I defend myself with these things, how it is fitting, when leaving you and the masters here, that I not take it with difficulty or be vexed...

εἰ δ’ ὀρθῶς προθυμήθην καὶ τι ἠγνόσαμεν, ἐκεῖσε ἐλθόντες τὸ σαφὲς εἰσόμεθα... ταῦτ’ οὖν ἐγώ, ... ἀπολογοῦμαι, ὥς εἰκότως ὑμᾶς τε ἀπολείπων καὶ τοὺς ἐνθάδε δεσπότας οὐχ αλεπῶς φέρω οὐδ’ ἀγανακτῶ... (69d4-6, d7-e1)

We will “know the clear truth” about what happens to the soul after death, he says, only once we are dead. In the meantime, Socrates suggests, we can make only ‘fitting’ arguments and, believing them, be brave in the face of death.

These arguments can be only fitting because their subject-matter is beyond the realm of human knowledge. Socrates has assumed throughout this argument that the soul is immortal (proposition 1),¹²⁰ and he has been making claims based on this Backing about what sort of experiences the soul has after the body’s death. Socrates cannot know such things for sure, nor can he prove them. All he can do is give well-reasoned speculation about what the soul might experience in the afterlife. However, his interlocutors are ready to hear none of this, and Cebes objects that he finds it difficult to believe in the immortality of the soul (69a-70b). Socrates must

¹²⁰ See the Toulmin diagram and accompanying citations for the argument in Section 2.2.1 for a complete list of the propositions in the argument and an analysis of how they are related.

now give a Backing for the Backing that the soul is immortal, which leads Socrates to provide the next three arguments for the immortality of the soul.

3.1.2 The Cyclical/Recollection Argument (CRA)

Although Socrates introduces the CRA with language that sounds less than fully confident, it is clear by the end of the argument that Socrates believes he has ‘proven’ the immortality of the soul through the CRA. When Cebes objects to the AGH because he is worried that the soul might be “destroyed and demolished” upon death (διαφθείρηται τε καὶ ἀπολλύηται, 70a3-4), Socrates agrees that the immortality of the soul deserves further discussion: “you say ... true things; ...but what should we do? Or do you wish that we should tell a story¹²¹ about these very things, whether it is fitting that they should be thus or not?” (ἀληθῆ ... λέγεις ...: ἀλλὰ τί δὴ ποιῶμεν; ἢ περὶ αὐτῶν τούτων βούλει διαμυθολογῶμεν, εἴτε εἰκὸς οὕτως ἔχειν εἴτε μή; 70b5-7). It is notable that Socrates introduces the CRA—an argument that he will soon say ‘proves’ the immortality of the soul—with a word connected to the idea of μῦθος, and also that he characterizes his investigation as one into what is εἰκός. This will stand out in particular to those familiar with the debates surrounding the interpretation of these terms in *Timaeus*. While this is not the place for a full discussion of these terms, I would like to note that even if Socrates speaks about the CRA as εἰκός before he

¹²¹ *LSJ* defines the use of διαμυθολογῶμεν in this particular passage as “tell a story” (A). Translators interpret it as “tell a more thorough story” (Brann et al.), “tell tales” (Burnet), “spin tales” (Morgan 2010, 73), “spend our conversation” (Sedley & Long), “discuss” (Grube). In any case, there does not seem to be too much import of the sense of telling a μῦθος, particularly since the argument is given in propositional rather than mythological language, and since Socrates calls the argument a ‘proof.’ Burnet suggests that “the word is specially appropriate as introducing” the εἰκὸς argument Socrates is about to give, but the idea that Socrates truly means the argument as (merely) εἰκός is also undermined by the fact that he calls it a ‘proof.’

begins the argument, he concludes the argument in a way that indicates that he is very sure of his conclusion, and that he has even ‘proven’ the immortality of the soul. Socrates agrees that “it is necessary to examine well” whether this is true (χρὴ διασκοπεῖσθαι, 70c2-3), and suggests that they “examine” (σκεψώμεθα, 70c4) the matter by first determining whether the souls of the dead exist in Hades, which he says will be a “sufficient sign” (ικανὸν τεκμήριον, 70d2) that souls of the living come to be from the souls of the dead. To be sure, none of this language that Socrates uses to introduce the CRA makes the argument sound airtight. Socrates is ‘telling a story’ about what seems ‘fitting,’ and ‘examining’ the idea that the soul is immortal through ‘signs.’ However, when Socrates finishes the first half of the argument (the Cyclical Argument),¹²² he declares his conclusion in no uncertain terms: “Not being deceived do we agree with these things, but in reality returning to life exists, and the living come to be from those who have died, and the souls of the dead exist” (ἡμεῖς αὐτὰ ταῦτα οὐκ ἐξαπατώμενοι ὁμολογοῦμεν, ἀλλ’ ἔστι τῷ ὄντι καὶ τὸ ἀναβιώσκεσθαι καὶ ἐκ τῶν τεθνεώτων τοὺς ζῶντας γίγνεσθαι καὶ τὰς τῶν τεθνεώτων ψυχὰς εἶναι, 72d7-10). This unhedged declaration makes Socrates sound quite sure of the conclusion to his argument, indicating that, now that he has produced the argument, it has a higher demonstrative status than was first suggested.

After the Cyclical Argument, Socrates receives no objections from his interlocutors; instead, Cebes immediately shifts the conversation to the doctrine of recollection by noting that the immortality of the soul is also suggested by recollection. Socrates argues that sensible particulars lead us to recollect knowledge of the Forms, and that this indicates that our souls had knowledge of the Forms before we were born. Both Simmias and Cebes agree that Socrates has

¹²² Although many scholars divide the Cyclical Argument from the Recollection argument, Socrates indicates that they should be understood together as one proof for the immortality of the soul, as discussed in the following paragraph.

“proven” that the soul exists before birth, but they object that the soul may still dissipate upon death. But Socrates suggests that they combine the Recollection Argument with the Cyclical Argument, and says that the immortality of the soul “has been proven” by this combined argument:

It has been proven ... even now, if you are willing to put this argument together with the same one on which we agreed before this one... In fact the very thing which you say has even now been proven.

ἀποδέδεικται μὲν ...καὶ νῦν, εἰ 'θέλετε συνθεῖναι τοῦτόν τε τὸν λόγον εἰς ταῦτόν καὶ ὃν πρὸ τούτου ὡμολογήσαμεν... ἀποδέδεικται μὲν οὖν ὅπερ λέγετε καὶ νῦν.
(77c6-7, 77d5)

Socrates here makes a very strong claim, twice using ἀποδέδεικται to emphasize the rigor he sees in the combined argument. How exactly these arguments are to be combined, however, has been a matter of debate. Gallop notes that “it is usually supposed that whereas the Cyclical Argument is meant to prove the bare existence of the discarnate soul, the Recollection Argument meets Cebes’ further demand to be shown that it possesses ‘some power and wisdom’ (70b3-4)” (136); however, this would not answer the objection Simmias and Cebes have just made (77b-c) that the Recollection Argument does not show the soul to exist after death. A more likely interpretation, then, is that Socrates means that the Recollection Argument proves the existence of the soul before birth, while the Cyclical Argument proves the existence of the soul after death (cf. Gallop, 136).¹²³ Either way, Socrates’ commitment to the strength of the combined argument seems clear: he has *proven*, he thinks, the immortality of the soul.

¹²³ A ‘combination’ of these two views might be that of Hackforth, who argues that Socrates uses the Recollection Argument in order to prove that “the soul *as conceived in the ἀνάμνησις argument*, the soul which apprehends the Forms, exists after death as well as before birth” (80, ital. in original). Such a view may have the advantage of accommodating the seeming fact that the Cyclical Argument seems to *imply* that the soul exists both after death and before birth, even if this is not made explicit.

Socrates believes he has proven this proposition because he has appealed to a higher proposition, that of the existence of the Forms,¹²⁴ than he did in the AGH. While Socrates described the demonstrative status of the AGH with terms like φράζω, δείκνυμι, and σημαίνω, Socrates claims in the CRA to “prove” (ἀποδείκνυμι) that the soul is immortal. This is because between the two arguments, Socrates ascends from a lower hypothesis (that the soul is immortal, used in the AGH) to the higher hypothesis of the Forms (used in the CRA). Socrates believes he can prove that the soul is immortal in the CRA precisely because of this ascent. By using the highest hypothesis of all as the Backing for the CRA, Socrates is able to develop an argument for the immortality of the soul that has the demonstrative status of a proof.

3.1.3 The Affinity Argument (AA)

Before Simmias and Cebes have a chance to object further to the CRA, Socrates directs their conversation toward a new argument, telling Cebes, “Nevertheless, you seem to me, you and Simmias, to pleasantly [want] to thoroughly examine the topic¹²⁵ still more” (ὅμως δέ μοι δοκεῖς σύ τε καὶ Σιμμίας ἡδέως ἂν καὶ τοῦτον διαπραγματεύσασθαι τὸν λόγον ἔτι μᾶλλον, 77d5-7). Socrates’ next argument, the Affinity Argument, argues that the soul is more similar to the world of Forms than to the world of particulars, and is thus deathless and immortal. He says that his aim

¹²⁴ Although only the Recollection section of the CRA explicitly uses the existence of the Forms as Backing, since the Recollection section is to be combined with the Cyclical section in order to make a full ‘proof,’ then the CRA as a whole uses the existence of the Forms as Backing.

¹²⁵ “The topic” is an unusual translation of the “τὸν λόγον” of this clause; more typically, we would expect “the argument.” However, Socrates does not discuss the same argument ‘still more,’ but instead gives a new argument on the same topic.

with the argument will be to consider what types of things are capable of being scattered, then to see whether the soul falls into this category:

It is necessary ... to question ... to what sort of thing it belongs to undergo this experience, i.e., being scattered, and for what sort of thing should we fear this experience, and for what sort of thing not; and after this, to consider anew whether the soul is [of this sort]...”

δεῖ ... ἀνερέσθαι ... τῷ ποίῳ τινὶ ἄρα προσήκει τοῦτο τὸ πάθος πάσχειν, τὸ διασκεδάννυσθαι, καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ποίου τινὸς δεδιέναι μὴ πάθῃ αὐτό, καὶ τῷ ποίῳ τινὶ οὐ: καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο αὖ ἐπισκέψασθαι πότερον ἢ ψυχὴ ἐστίν... (78b4-8)

Socrates follows through on the first part of his plan to establish ‘to what sort of thing it belongs’ to be scattered, concluding that ‘it belongs’ to composite and dissolvable things. But instead of questioning whether the soul is in fact of this sort, he claims only that the soul is “more alike” (ὁμοιότερον, 79b16, 79e1) and “more akin” (συγγενέστερον, 79e1) to what is *not* of that sort (i.e., Forms). Socrates strengthens this claim about likeness slightly when he says that the soul is “*most* alike”¹²⁶ (ὁμοιότατον, 80b3) what is divine and deathless, but this seems to be undermined when he declares that “it belongs to soul to be altogether indissoluble, or something near¹²⁷ to this” (προσήκει, ψυχῇ δὲ αὖ τὸ παράπαν ἀδιαλύτῳ εἶναι ἢ ἐγγὺς τι τούτου, 80b10-11). Apolloni argues that “the sense we get from the use of these increasingly stronger adjectives is that the Affinity Argument is an argument whose parts cumulatively support the conclusion”;¹²⁸ but if Socrates’ aim is to demonstrate the immortality of the soul, merely claiming that it is ‘altogether indissoluble, or something near to this’ does not a strong argument make.

¹²⁶ Gallop notes that this could also be translated as “very similar,” and that this carries a different connotation from “most similar” (i.e., more similar than anything else). “These interpretations of the superlative are logically distinct,” he says, and “on neither interpretation would it follow that the soul shares all the features of the forms” (142).

¹²⁷ It may also be appropriate to translate ἐγγὺς here as “akin.” “Akin” might make Socrates’ claim sound stronger, i.e., soul has some sort of family resemblance to the Forms, rather than that soul is close to but short of the perfection of the Forms. (Cp. Gertz: “On the most natural reading of this phrase, the argument from affinity has only proved that the soul is longer-lasting than body, but not that it is immortal” (125)). Gallop, Gertz, and Brann et al. all translate “close”; Sedley & Long, and also Grube translate “nearly so.” Cp. Gallop: “On the other hand, ‘nearly indissoluble’ seems the more natural way of reading the present text” (142).

¹²⁸ Apolloni (1996) 12.

Many commentators consider the AA to be the weakest argument in the dialogue, with Elton going so far as to call it “an object lesson in how not to mount an argument” (315). Most of this criticism stems from both the seemingly weak conclusion that ‘it belongs to the soul to be altogether indissoluble, *or something near to this*,’ and the fact that the argument has an analogical structure. Bostock, for instance, claims that “Plato ... knows well enough that analogies can never count as conclusive proofs... [A]nalogies can quite often be *persuasive*, ... but the present analogies really are not.”¹²⁹

More recently, Apolloni has argued that the AA is, in fact, a “deductive” and “ingenious argument—one having philosophical merit comparable to or greater than Plato's other immortality arguments (in the *Phaedo*, or at *Phaedrus* 245).”¹³⁰ Whereas other scholars see the AA as somewhat bizarre because they believe it stands in stark contrast to the other, more felicitous arguments in the dialogue, Apolloni applies Socrates’ own advice against misology¹³¹ to his interpretation of the AA, reminding us that an argument’s “oddness indicates that we are not understanding the argument—not that we should take it as a weak argument from analogy” (10, cf. 90c-91a). The force of Apolloni’s interpretation comes from his argument that in positing two categories of things (Forms and particulars), Socrates means to have given an exhaustive list of thing-categories¹³²; thus when soul is found to be invisible, unchanging, and divine, it is found to have “the defining characteristics” of the Form category, “and accordingly, [it] *belongs to*” the

¹²⁹ Bostock (1986) 120. It is not clear what, exactly, the *multiple* analogies Bostock here refers to are. He may mean that one analogy is made between the soul and the world of particulars, while another one is made between the soul and the world of Forms.

¹³⁰ Apolloni (1996) 7, 13.

¹³¹ *Phaedo* 90c-91d.

¹³² Apolloni quickly rejects the idea that the soul might belong to some third kind of “immanent” being such as the largeness in Simmias, which is sensible and can pass away in relation to other things, but does not ever admit its opposite: “For even if immanent characters do constitute a third kind, Plato makes it quite clear ... that the soul could not belong to such a kind because immanent characters are dependent upon their subjects for their existence, and the soul's ‘divinity rules this out, as does Socrates’ response to the theory that the soul is a harmony (93ff.)” (13).

Form category¹³³ (30, ital. mine). Apolloni is then able to call the AA “deductive”—and thus non-analogical—by claiming that Socrates believes he has shown the soul to have sufficient conditions for belonging to the category of Forms. This, however, would seem to strip the Affinity Argument of affinity, and Socrates’ own language of the soul being ‘alike’ and ‘akin’ to the Forms to various degrees¹³⁴ would indicate rather that he intends very much for the AA to be an argument from analogy. In addition, Simmias and Cebes seem to interpret Socrates’ argument as analogical, because in their Rebuttals, they use the same analogical structure to suggest that the soul may be ‘more like’ something other than the Forms. It thus seems best to interpret the AA as an argument in analogical form, without importing our more modern notions of sufficient conditions as Apolloni does.¹³⁵

But the AA is also not an argument of mere probability, as Bluck claims (23). Like Apolloni, Bluck gives a more generous reading of the AA, calling it “attractive” and “likely to appeal to those who find rigid logic unsatisfying” (73).¹³⁶ However, the language of probability or fittingness is completely absent from the argument until *after* Socrates has concluded that the soul is indissoluble. If we recall the Toulmin analysis of this argument from section 2.2.2, the AA has

¹³³ Here Apolloni may more accurately, by his own measure, have qualified that the soul *normatively* belongs to the Form category, since he believes that “even though Socrates wishes to defend the idea that the soul is invisible, always the same, and divine—attributes antithetical to those of physical objects—he thinks that the soul can take on some of the nature of physical bodies if it is in communion with them to too great a degree” (11). But Apolloni’s interpretation is likely too literal. Socrates’ belief that the soul can become, shall we say, caught up in the physical realm does not seem to imply that the soul can ‘take on some of the nature of physical bodies.’ Cf. 81c, qtd. two paragraphs below. Even though, as Gallop notes, “Socrates does not consistently speak of [the soul] as immaterial” (143), most of the language of this sort is in contexts where Socrates can easily be understood to be speaking figuratively. Considering that immaterial beings cannot literally be located in space, Socrates’ language here must be figurative (cf. Hackforth 186).

¹³⁴ Socrates describes the soul as “ὁμοιότερον,” 79b16, 79e1; “συγγενέστερον,” 79e1; and “ὁμοιότατον,” 80b; these are all quoted above in this section.

¹³⁵ The Toulmin diagram provided in section 2.3.4 analyzes the argument as one from analogy.

¹³⁶ It is notable that the AA is given in response to Simmias and Cebes’ “fears” that the soul dissipates upon the death of the body, rather than to logical objections to the previous argument (CRA). This point will be discussed at length in section 4.4.

both an initial Claim and a final Claim. Its initial Claim is that the soul is immortal, while its final Claim is that the philosopher should not fear death because he anticipates a pleasant afterlife. Socrates applies language of probability or fittingness only after his initial claim, meaning that such language applies only to his claims about what happens to souls in the afterlife.¹³⁷ Socrates thus seems *not* to consider the initial Claim of the AA—that the soul is indissoluble—as a ‘probable’ or ‘fitting’ conclusion, but something stronger than this.¹³⁸

After the initial Claim that the soul is indissoluble, Socrates continues to argue for the final Claim of the AA that the souls of those who have practiced philosophy rightly in life will be drawn to the true and divine in the afterlife. While doing so, he emphasizes that the soul of someone who has concerned himself greatly with bodily pleasures in his life will not have the same experience; rather it will be “tied up with a corporeal nature” (διειλημμένην ... ὑπὸ τοῦ σωματοειδοῦς, 81c4), and may even appear as a ghost (81c-d). It is the philosophical soul in particular that can look forward to an afterlife in communion with the divine, and furthermore—a point which has gone unnoticed by most scholars—the philosophical soul will *be aware* that it can look forward to such an afterlife: “from such nurture, there is no danger that [the philosophical soul] should fear [dissipating upon the body’s death], having pursued these things” (ἐκ δὲ τῆς τοιαύτης τροφῆς οὐδὲν δεινὸν μὴ φοβηθῇ, ταῦτα δ’ ἐπιτηδεύσασα, 84b2-4). Socrates is telling two men who fear that their souls will dissipate that they would not have these fear if they were living rightly; such fears are simply unknown to the philosophical soul. So while the AA is an argument for the

¹³⁷ For instance, Socrates says that “[souls] are bound, *as is fitting*, into the sorts of characters which they happen to have practiced in life,” (ἐνδοῦνται δέ, ὥσπερ εἰκός, εἰς τοιαῦτα ἥθη ὅποι’ ἄττ’ ἂν καὶ μεμελετηκυῖαι τύχῳσιν ἐν τῷ βίῳ, 81e2-4) and “*it is fitting* that these [political sorts of souls] should come back into a political sort and a tame stock, of bees or wasps or ants...” (ὅτι τούτους εἰκός ἐστὶν εἰς τοιοῦτον πάλιν ἀφικνεῖσθαι πολιτικὸν καὶ ἡμερον γένος, ἢ που μελιττῶν ἢ σφηκῶν ἢ μυρμηκῶν..., 82b5-7).

¹³⁸ As I argued in section 2.2.2, Simmias and Cebes raise Rebuttals that, if true, would undermine even Socrates’ initial Claim that the soul is immortal. However, Socrates refutes these Rebuttals and does not *himself* use any language of probability or likelihood until after his initial Claim.

immortality of the soul, it is also an argument for living the philosophical life, which, it seems, Simmias and Cebes are not yet living well enough.¹³⁹

The demonstrative status of the AA is more nuanced than any other argument in the dialogue. While the CRA, and, as I will discuss in section 3.1.4, the Final Argument, are said to have ‘proven’ the immortality of the soul, Socrates makes no such claims about the AA. In fact, Socrates concedes after the argument that “there are still many points of suspicion and of attack, if someone intends to go through these things sufficiently” (πολλὰς γὰρ δὴ ἔτι ἔχει ὑποψίας καὶ ἀντιλαβὰς, εἴ γε δὴ τις αὐτὰ μέλλει ἱκανῶς διεξιέναι, 84c6-8).¹⁴⁰ There are, it seems, two reasons for this. One is that the analogical structure of the argument is not that of a proof, so the mere form of the argument will not permit the same demonstrative status that is afforded to the CRA and FA.¹⁴¹ The second reason is that throughout *Phaedo*, Socrates claims to have ‘proven’ only the bare fact of the immortality of the soul, while his arguments about how the soul spends its time after the body’s death are never ‘proven,’ but are hedged in various ways. Recall that the AA has both the initial Claim that the soul is immortal and the final Claim that the philosopher should not fear death because his afterlife will be pleasant. The language of what is ‘fitting’ or ‘likely’ enters the AA only *after* the initial Claim, when Socrates begins making statements about what the

¹³⁹ It may be that Socrates suggests again that Simmias and Cebes have philosophical work to do when he argues against misology, saying that it would be a “pitiable affair” if, when confronted with an argument that is “true, certain, and able to be accepted,” someone should mistrust the argument (οἰκτρὸν ... πάθος, ... ὄντος δὴ ... ἀληθοῦς καὶ βεβαίου λόγου καὶ δυνατοῦ κατανοῆσαι, 90c8-d1). While Socrates doesn’t directly accuse his interlocutors of being misologists, it is difficult not to think that he may be doing so indirectly, since he has spent the morning making arguments to people who continue to mistrust them.

¹⁴⁰ The idea that the AA might not be fully ‘sufficient’ as stands occurs once more, when Socrates tells Simmias, “Perhaps ... what appears to you is true; but say in what way exactly [the AA] was not sufficiently [stated]” (ἴσως γὰρ ... ἀληθὴ σοὶ φαίνεται: ἀλλὰ λέγε ὅπῃ δὴ οὐχ ἱκανῶς, 85e).

¹⁴¹ There are, of course, better and worse analogies, and analogies can be shown to be better or worse through deductive reasoning. Socrates gives an example of this when he refutes Simmias’ suggestion that the soul may be more like a harmony (85e-6d) and Cebes’ suggestion that the soul may be like a cloak (87a-8b). The fact that Socrates examines and evaluates these counter-analogies through deductive argument may suggest that Socrates gives more credit to argument from analogy generally than modern commentators do. After all, even deductive arguments and proofs are, for Socrates, still to be examined thoroughly through further deductive argument.

afterlife and reincarnation might be like, meaning that only the final Claim to the argument—that the philosopher should not fear death—is subject to such qualifications.¹⁴² The initial Claim, however, stating merely that the soul is immortal, is not subject to these qualifications, and cannot be counted as a proof only because of the analogical argument structure. In this way, the AA has a demonstrative status between that of the arguments in *Phaedo* that argue only for the bare proposition of the immortality of the soul (CRA, FA) and those that describe the fate of the soul after the body's death (AGH, Myth).

3.1.4 The Final Argument (FA)

In the Final Argument, Socrates argues only for the bare proposition of the immortality of the soul. He is thus able to say that this argument “proves” the immortality of the soul, and although he says that Simmias and Cebes may want to examine the hypotheses on which it is based, Socrates himself seems quite convinced that what he says in the FA is true. When Socrates asks if it “has been proven” that the soul is deathless, even Cebes agrees that it has been “very sufficiently proven.”¹⁴³ Since what is deathless is by its very nature indestructible,¹⁴⁴ Socrates declares quite firmly that “more than anything, the soul is deathless and indestructible, and in reality our souls

¹⁴² Similar language can be found in the AGH, qtd. above in section 3.2.2: ὥς ἔοικεν, 66e; ὥς ἔοικεν, 67a4; ὥς τὸ εἶκός, 67a8.

¹⁴³ Socrates: ἀθάνατον ἄρα ψυχή. ... τοῦτο μὲν δὴ ἀποδεδεῖχθαι φῶμεν; Cebes: καὶ μάλα γε ἱκανῶς (105e6, 8-9).

¹⁴⁴ While a complete discussion of the legitimacy of this proposition does not fit within the scope of this chapter, I should note that understanding the proposition that ‘soul is deathless’ as saying *merely* that it is alive as long as it exists, as Bostock does (192), does not seem to be a charitable interpretation, and renders Socrates’ proposition that what is deathless is indestructible false. It seems preferable to take the interpretation of Bluck: “the point is that soul is not only incapable of admitting the contrary of its essential attribute (life), ...it is also incapable of admitting its *contradictory*, destruction; it could not admit destruction without, incidentally, dying” (119, ital. in original).

are in Hades.”¹⁴⁵ Socrates believes the FA has a very high demonstrative status; it “proves” that the soul is immortal and that “in reality” the souls of the dead are in Hades.¹⁴⁶ Even Simmias and Cebes seem to agree, since neither of them can come up with a Rebuttal to the argument, and both say that they at least do not “disbelieve” Socrates’ arguments.¹⁴⁷ Still, there is a difference between not disbelieving and actually believing, and Socrates wishes that Simmias and Cebes actually believe the argument. So he suggests that his interlocutors may want to examine further the hypotheses on which the argument is based:

You say rightly that the first hypotheses, even if they are believable to us, nevertheless are to be examined more clearly: and if you divide them sufficiently, as I think, you will follow the argument, down as far as absolutely possible for a man to pursue: and should this very thing become sure, you would seek nothing further.

εὖ λέγεις καὶ τάς γε ὑποθέσεις τὰς πρώτας, καὶ εἰ πισταὶ ὑμῖν εἰσιν, ὅμως ἐπισκεπτέαι σαφέστερον: καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὰς ἱκανῶς διέλῃτε, ὥς ἐγὼμαι, ἀκολουθήσετε τῷ λόγῳ, καθ’ ὅσον δυνατόν μάλιστα ἄνθρωπῳ ἐπακολουθήσαι: κἂν τοῦτο αὐτὸ σαφὲς γένηται, οὐδὲν ζητήσετε περαιτέρω. (107b5-9)

While Socrates suggests that his interlocutors may want to examine the first hypotheses, he implies that he has already done this work and has found for himself that the hypotheses are quite secure.

¹⁴⁸ His focus is on his interlocutors making these hypotheses secure for themselves as well, as

¹⁴⁵ “Παντὸς μᾶλλον ἄρα, ... ψυχὴ ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον, καὶ τῷ ὄντι ἔσσονται ἡμῶν αἱ ψυχαὶ ἐν Ἄϊδου” (106e8-107a1).

¹⁴⁶ I have so far claimed that Socrates calls arguments ‘proven’ in this dialogue only when they argue for the mere fact of the immortality of the soul, yet here seems to be an example in which Socrates claims to have proven also that souls exist in Hades. I can say only that Socrates seems oddly insistent that souls exist *somewhere* even when discarnate (e.g., 81c-d), despite the fact that souls are incorporeal. If ‘in Hades’ can be taken to mean something like ‘in whatever way the souls of the dead exist,’ then It would follow more or less directly from the immortality of the soul that discarnate souls exist ‘in Hades’—whatever that may mean.

¹⁴⁷ Cebes says, “I at least...in no way have something else to say against these things, nor do I disbelieve the arguments” (οὐκ οὖν ἔγωγε... ἔχω παρὰ ταῦτα ἄλλο τι λέγειν οὐδέ πη ἀπιστεῖν τοῖς λόγοις, 107a2-3). Right after, Simmias comments similarly: “And I truly do not still hold disbelief in any way from these arguments” (ἀλλὰ μήν, ... οὐδ’ αὐτὸς ἔχω ἔτι ὅπῃ ἀπιστῶ ἔκ γε τῶν λεγομένων, 107a8-9).

¹⁴⁸ What exactly the hypotheses referred to here are, as well as Socrates’ level of intellectual commitment to them is, is discussed at length in Section 3.2. These hypotheses include at least the hypothesis of the Forms, and perhaps more than one hypothesis about the nature of the Forms. This is suggested also by Socrates’ description of his intellectual history at 96a ff., in which Socrates declares the hypothesis of the Forms to be the most sure of his hypotheses.

shown through his use of second-person verbs: “if you divide them sufficiently” (ἐὰν αὐτὰς ἱκανῶς διέλητε), “you will follow the argument” (ἀκολουθήσετε), “you would seek nothing further” (οὐδὲν ζητήσετε περαιτέρω). Socrates wishes that his interlocutors do the same, dividing the hypotheses and following their arguments down until the hypotheses become secure for Simmias and Cebes as well. This process will take time, however, time that a man on his literal deathbed does not have, so Socrates now shifts the conversation to the myth, in order to elaborate on the fate of the soul after death. By doing so, he indicates that he finds the soul’s immortality to have been not only sufficiently proven, but sufficiently proven to his interlocutors’ satisfaction—even if they aren’t quite ready to believe it.

3.1.5 The Myth

In Chapter 2, I analyzed the myth in *Phaedo* as an argument using the Toulmin Model, in order to show that it uses the preceding propositional arguments for the immortality of the soul as Backing, to argue for the Claim that we must take care of our souls both before and after death. In this way, I showed how the myth has an argumentative function akin to that of the propositional arguments in the dialogue. The myth, just like the propositional arguments, constructs its argument from a hypothesis (Backing), in order to show what that hypothesis entails (i.e., what Claims it leads to).

Here, I aim to show that the language Socrates uses to describe the demonstrative status of the myth is not so different from the language he uses to describe other arguments that elaborate on the fate of the soul after death (AGH and AA), and in particular the AGH. The myth cannot have the demonstrative status of a proof like the CRA and the FA, because it elaborates on the fate

of the soul after death, and Socrates is unwilling to aver such details about the fate of the soul after death. However, Socrates awards the myth a demonstrative status very similar to that of the AGH, which suggests that it is not the myth's mythological language or imagery that gives it the status it has, but rather its subject matter. Socrates is no less certain about the claims of the myth than he is about any other claims about the fate of the soul, regardless of whether they are in mythological or propositional language.

Some scholars believe that Socrates indicates that the claims he makes in the myth are to be taken less seriously than those he makes in propositional language, and thus that the myth has a lower demonstrative status than these propositional arguments.¹⁴⁹ However, there are many indications that Socrates believes what he says in the myth, even if he cannot *prove* the claims he makes in the myth.¹⁵⁰ One passage that is often taken to indicate that Socrates means the myth to be taken less seriously is his introduction to it:

It doesn't seem to me to be [a matter for] the skill of Glaucus to fully describe what [the soul and the earth] are;¹⁵¹ to show that these things are *true*, though, appears to me to be more difficult than the skill of Glaucus. And I might not be able to, but also, even if I knew, my life seems to be not sufficient in length for the account. οὐχ ἡ Γλαύκου τέχνη γέ μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι διηγήσασθαι ἃ γ' ἐστίν: ὥς μέντοι ἀληθῆ, χαλεπώτερόν μοι φαίνεται ἢ κατὰ τὴν Γλαύκου τέχνην, καὶ ἅμα μὲν ἐγὼ ἴσως οὐδ' ἂν οἶός τε εἶην, ἅμα δέ, εἰ καὶ ἠπιστάμην, ὁ βίος μοι δοκεῖ ὁ ἐμός... τῷ μήκει τοῦ λόγου οὐκ ἐξαρκεῖν. (108d4-9)

¹⁴⁹ One of these passages is discussed at length in Chapter 4, which focuses on the persuasive nature of the arguments and the myth. That passage is 114d: “it is necessary to sing these things just as a charm to oneself, on account of which I extended my myth just now” (χρή τὰ τοιαῦτα ὥσπερ ἐπάδειν ἑαυτῷ, διὸ δὴ ἔγωγε καὶ πάλοι μηκύνω τὸν μῦθον, 114d).

¹⁵⁰ More of these indications that Socrates believes what he says in the myth will be discussed in Chapter 4—namely, the many places that Socrates says he has been ‘persuaded’ of the contents of the myth.

¹⁵¹ The beginning of this sentence—οὐχ ἡ Γλαύκου τέχνη γέ μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι διηγήσασθαι—is somewhat difficult to render into English. Many translators render the phrase with an idea of necessity: “it doesn't seem I'll need the art of Glaucus” (Brann et al.), “I do not think it requires the skill of Glaucus” (Grube), “I don't think that describing what they are...requires the skill of Glaucus (Sedley and Long). Those who find this necessity to be a stretch may be tempted to read the εἶναι as an indication of *ability* (“the skill of Glaucus does not seem to me *to be able* to fully describe [these things]”); however, this interpretation doesn't leave much room for contrast with the second clause of the sentence, in which Socrates says that showing these things to be true would be *more difficult than* the skill of Glaucus. I am here following Rowe's suggestion that the εἶναι be taken rather blandly (“to be”), even though this requires us to supply something along the lines of “a matter for” (1993, 270).

This is a strange and difficult passage, not least because Socrates casts himself in comparison with a figure not wholly known to us today.¹⁵² What Socrates seems to be saying is that although he is able to ‘fully describe’ what the soul and the earth ‘are’ (διηγέσασθαι ἃ γ’ ἐστίν), he will not be able to demonstrate (or “prove,” as Grube interprets the missing verb) that what he is saying is true.¹⁵³ We have, therefore, a suggestion that the contents of the myth are describable but not demonstrable, which is consistent with the way Socrates speaks of his earlier arguments regarding the fate of the soul after death. After giving a description of the fate of the soul after death in the AGH, for instance, Socrates says that he cannot know whether these things are true until after he is dead: “Whether I have shown zeal rightly and we have accomplished anything, we will know the clear facts [only once] we have gone there [to Hades]” (εἰ δ’ ὁρθῶς προουθυμήθην καί τι ἠγύσαμεν, ἐκεῖσε ἐλθόντες τὸ σαφὲς εἰσόμεθα, 69d4-6). In both the myth and the AGH, Socrates is willing to try to describe the fate of the soul after death, but he cannot prove, or even know for sure, whether what he is saying is true.

The fact that Socrates cannot prove or know what he claims in the myth, however, does not mean that the myth should be disbelieved. After all, it is constructed in a rational manner with the hypothesis of immortality—a hypothesis that has been “proven”—as its Backing. After he tells the myth, he tells his interlocutors that it is, if nothing else, worthy of belief:

¹⁵² “The ‘skill of Glaucus’ is “a proverbial phrase for expertise. It may refer to Glaucus of Samos, who was said to be the inventor of welding” (Brann et al., 91 n. 27). Cf. Grube 146, n. 17. Geddes, however, notes that “it is somewhat remarkable that the Scholiasts and Paroemiographi do not connect the proverb with the prophetic craft of the other Glaucus, who was regarded as the wizard of the sea” (161, n. D). Sedley and Long give also a third option, a Glaucus who invented a harmonious instrument (105).

¹⁵³ A further difficulty in understanding this passage is posed when Socrates says εἰ καὶ ἠπιστάμην: the phrase as it stands is ambiguous between whether Socrates means knowing *how* or knowing *that*. In other words, it is unclear whether Socrates means ‘even if I knew how to give an account of these things, I would not have the time’ or ‘even if I knew that these things were true, I would not have time to give an account.’ *LSJ* indicates that either interpretation is plausible (A.I, c. infinitive, and A.II, c. accusative); since the clause lacks both an object and a complimentary infinitive, however, it remains ambiguous. Rowe suggests that “in the light of the counterfactual ‘if I did know how to,’ ἵσως probably does not indicate any real doubt about [Socrates’] lack of the relevant skill... [Socrates] will not, in any case, commit himself to the truth of the description” (1986, 270).

To affirm these things confidently in exactly the way I have explained is not proper to a man having reason; but indeed that these things or things such as these are true about our souls and their dwellings, since indeed the soul appears to be deathless, this seems to me proper and worth risking for one who believes these things are thus—for the risk is noble...

τὸ μὲν οὖν ταῦτα δυσχυρίσασθαι οὕτως ἔχειν ὥς ἐγὼ διελέλυθα, οὐ πρέπει νοῦν ἔχοντι ἀνδρὶ: ὅτι μέντοι ἢ ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ἢ τοιαῦτ' ἅττα περὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν καὶ τὰς οἰκίσεις, ἐπεὶ περ ἀθάνατόν γε ἡ ψυχή φαίνεται οὔσα, τοῦτο καὶ πρέπειν¹⁵⁴ μοι δοκεῖ καὶ ἄξιον κινδυνεῦσαι οἰομένῳ οὕτως ἔχειν—καλὸς γὰρ ὁ κίνδυνος... (114d1-6)

Although it is not proper to believe each detail of what Socrates has said in the myth, it is nevertheless ‘proper’ to believe ‘that these things or things such as these are true about our souls’ (ὅτι μέντοι ἢ ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ἢ τοιαῦτ' ἅττα περὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν)—that is, through some kind of process, souls migrate to new bodies to be born into a new life. It doesn’t matter, then, whether Socrates has gotten all of the details right; rather, since *something* along the lines of what he has said is worthy of belief, his conclusion that we must take care of our souls before and after death still holds true.¹⁵⁵ Socrates says that he won’t “affirm entirely confidently” everything he has said (τὸ μὲν οὖν ταῦτα δυσχυρίσασθαι οὕτως ἔχειν ὥς ἐγὼ διελέλυθα, οὐ πρέπει νοῦν ἔχοντι ἀνδρὶ), but this is precisely the verb he used to describe his confidence in the AGH as well:

Now, though, know well that I hope to arrive [at a place] among good men—and *this is not [something which] I would affirm entirely confidently*—[but] know well that *if indeed I would affirm confidently something else* among such things, it would be this: that I will be in the presence of gods, entirely good masters.

νῦν δὲ εἴς τε ὅτι παρ' ἀνδρας τε ἐλπίζω ἀφίξεσθαι ἀγαθοὺς—καὶ τοῦτο μὲν οὐκ ἂν πάνυ δυσχυρισαίμην—ὅτι μέντοι παρὰ θεοὺς δεσπότης πάνυ ἀγαθοὺς ἦξιν, εἴς τε ὅτι εἴπερ τι ἄλλο τῶν τοιούτων δυσχυρισαίμην ἂν καὶ τοῦτο. (63b9-c4).

¹⁵⁴ Translated in accordance with *LSJ* AIII, c. dat. pers. c. part.: “to be conspicuously fitting, beseeem.”

¹⁵⁵ Hackforth notes that “there is no question of *inaccuracy*” in the myth because the language is figurative: “first, there are not and cannot be any οἰκίσεις for discarnate souls, since an immaterial being cannot occupy physical space: and secondly, there is no question of *inaccuracy*, of mistaken detail, in the myth; what the myth has done... is to present the immaterial in a material form, to suggest the invisible ‘world’ through the medium of language literally applicable only to the visible” (1955, 186, ital. in original).

Socrates seems quite confident in both cases that the soul is immortal, and that the philosophical soul is drawn toward the divine in some way upon the death of the body, even though further talk of how exactly this works or what exactly happens to the soul on its journey will be merely well-reasoned speculation.¹⁵⁶ Such speculation will still be well-reasoned, though, because it is born from a well-reasoned Backing—the hypothesis that the soul is immortal—which lends authority to it.

It is important to speculate about what sorts of things the discarnate soul might experience because Socrates is aiming in both the AGH and the myth to show his interlocutors not merely *that* the soul is immortal, but what the *consequences* of the soul's immortality are, i.e., what this fact tells them about how to live their lives and how to care for their souls. Neither the AGH nor the myth explicitly *argue* for the immortality of the soul¹⁵⁷—the AGH because Socrates assumed the immortality of the soul, and the myth because Socrates has argued for (and even ‘proven’) the soul's immortality earlier in the dialogue. The aim of both the AGH and the myth is rather to show that regardless of the exact shape of the earth, the exact geography of Hades, and the exact form of judgment after death, it is necessary to believe something along the lines of what Socrates says about the fate of the soul after death, and to live one's life accordingly. It may still be a “risk” (κίνδυνος) to believe such things, but the risk is “beautiful” or “noble” (καλός).¹⁵⁸

Some might suspect that the AGH and the myth cannot share a similar demonstrative status because Socrates specifically calls the AGH a λόγος, whereas he calls the myth a μῦθος, which

¹⁵⁶ In section 2.4, when I analyzed the fundamental argumentative structure of the myth through the Toulmin model, all such details were missing from the argument analysis. This is because the basic argumentative structure of the myth does not require any such details. With the myth, Socrates is not trying to argue that the earth or underworld have a particular geography, but instead that the hypothesis of the Forms (and also, therefore, what comes from the hypothesis of the Forms, namely, the hypothesis of the soul's immortality) leads to the conclusion that one must pursue virtue and wisdom.

¹⁵⁷ In section 3.2, I will argue that the immortality of the soul plays the role of a hypothesis in both of these arguments.

¹⁵⁸ 114d6, qtd. above in previous paragraph.

might seem to indicate discourse of different statuses. However, the difference between *μῦθος* and *λόγος* is not completely consistent in Plato, and whatever difference there may be, it is not necessarily one that indicates a difference in demonstrative status.¹⁵⁹ The fact that Socrates calls the AGH a *λόγος* (66e3, 67c6) and the myth a *μῦθος* (114d8) could be explained simply by the fact that the former is in propositional language and the latter in mythological language. The *μῦθος/λόγος* distinction alone does not seem to be good reason for taking the AGH and the myth to have differing demonstrative statuses, particularly in the face of the indications that they *do* have similar demonstrative status that I have discussed in this section.

I have argued throughout section 3.1 that the demonstrative status of each argument (including the myth) in *Phaedo* takes on a chiastic structure.¹⁶⁰ The second and fourth arguments (CRA and FA) are said to have ‘proven’ the bare fact of the soul’s immortality, while the first and fifth (AGH and Myth) are specifically designated as not to be ‘affirmed entirely confidently’ because they discuss details about what happens in the afterlife. Between all of these, the middle argument (AA) has a more complex demonstrative status: its final Claim that the soul is immortal is stated in more certain terms (somewhat similarly to the CRA and FA, while still not being called a ‘proof’), while its preliminary Claim about what happens to the soul after death is stated in less certain terms. At the same time, nothing in the argument could be considered a ‘proof’ because of the analogical structure of the entire argument. One clear distinction arising from this pattern, however, is that Socrates says he has ‘proven’ only the simple fact of the immortality of the soul

¹⁵⁹ See Section 1.1.1: A Brief History of Muthos.

¹⁶⁰ This is not to say that there is necessarily a poetic significance to this structure; rather, I mean “chiastic” as simply a shorthand for summarizing the similarities among the demonstrative status of the arguments in an A-B-C-B-A manner. We should note, however, that the arguments also follow this same chiastic structure *thematically*. The ‘A’ arguments (AGH and Myth) both make a moral case for pursuing the philosophical life; the ‘B’ arguments (CRA and FA) are both derived from facts about opposites (or more precisely, Forms of opposites); the ‘C’ argument (AA) derives its argument from the soul’s affinity with the Forms.

(CRA and FA), while he makes no such claims—and, in fact, hedges his claims—about what exactly happens to the soul after death. The myth falls into this latter category of arguments that are hedged, but this does not appear to be because of its mythological language. Rather, the myth seems to have a demonstrative status similar to that of the AGH, which is given in propositional language. Socrates does not wish to ‘affirm confidently’ (δυσχυρίσασθαι, 63c2, 114d1) what he says in either of these cases, nor can he show that what he says in the myth is true (ὥς μέντοι ἀληθῆ, 108d5) or know the clear facts (τὸ σαφές, 69d5-6) about what he says in the AGH. But it is a ‘noble risk’ (καλὸς γὰρ ὁ κίνδυνος, 114d6) to believe what the myth says about the afterlife, and believing what he says in the AGH allows Socrates’ ‘departure [to be] accompanied by good hope’ (ἀποδημία... μετὰ ἀγαθῆς ἐλπίδος γίνεται, 67c1-2). It is not because the myth is given in mythological *language* that Socrates cannot ‘affirm it confidently’ or show that is ‘true,’ but because of its subject-matter: there is no knowledge of the particulars of the afterlife available to human beings.

It is striking that Socrates draws the line between what is provable and what is not where he does. Socrates seems to believe that one *can*, in fact, prove that the soul is immortal, even though it seems at least to modern readers that knowledge of even *whether* the soul is immortal is clearly beyond the scope of human knowledge. Understanding why Socrates believes he can ‘prove’ the immortality of the soul will require examining the role of hypothesis throughout the dialogue, with particular emphasis on the hypothesis of the Forms, which is the Backing for each of Socrates’ arguments.

3.2 The Role of the Hypothesis of the Forms throughout *Phaedo*

Just before the Final Argument, Socrates takes a moment to explain what is sometimes called his ‘intellectual history’ or ‘second sailing,’¹⁶¹ that is, his shift in the way he looks for the causes of things. The method that Socrates eventually adopted both for seeking causes and other things is the method of hypothesis. Many scholars read what Socrates says about hypotheses only in reference to its immediate surroundings, i.e., the hypothesis of the Forms that Socrates introduces and the Final Argument that follows. However, I argue in this section that Socrates’ comments about the method of hypothesis make much more sense when read in reference to *all* the arguments of the dialogue. I conclude that reading the hypothesis of the Forms as a ‘higher’ hypothesis and the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul as a ‘lower’ hypothesis derived from the ‘higher’ one allows us to read the full progression of arguments in *Phaedo* as an example of testing a hypothesis by examining its consequences.

Just before Socrates gives the FA, he explains that in each investigation, he begins with the hypothesis of the Forms:

I begin from those [Forms], hypothesizing that there is some Beautiful itself by itself and some Good and some Great and all the rest; if you grant these to me and allow that they are, I hope to show to you from these the cause and to derive how the soul is deathless.

ἄρχομαι ἀπ’ ἐκείνων, ὑποθέμενος εἶναι τι καλὸν αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ μέγα καὶ τᾶλλα πάντα: ἃ εἴ μοι δίδως τε καὶ συγχωρεῖς εἶναι ταῦτα, ἐλπίζω σοι ἐκ τούτων τὴν αἰτίαν ἐπιδείξειν καὶ ἀνευρήσειν ὡς ἀθάνατον ἢ ψυχή. (100b5-9)

¹⁶¹ Some scholars read the phrase with which Socrates describes his new search for causes, δεύτερος πλοῦς (99d1), as the “second best” method (e.g., Bluck [1955], 166-7). However, the phrase can equally be translated “second sailing,” which “refers to the use of oars when the wind fails” (Brann et al. 1998, 79). The phrase need not indicate that the method of hypothesis Socrates is about to describe is somehow deficient.

Even though Socrates has used the hypothesis of Forms as Backing for each of his previous arguments, he has so far depended only on the idea that the Forms *exist*, or more explicitly, that there exist some entities that are invisible, noncomposite, and unchanging, which we call Forms.¹⁶² So far, Socrates has made no claims about Forms as causes, nor has he relied on the Forms as causes in any of the previous arguments. Here Socrates makes this explicit by saying that if his interlocutors will grant that the Forms exist, he hopes to ‘show from these [Forms] the cause’ (ἐκ τούτων τὴν αἰτίαν ἐπιδείξειν, 100b8). In making the claim only that the Forms exist, Socrates says he is saying “nothing new, but the very thing I have never stopped saying both at other times and in the account that has just passed [i.e., the AA]” (οὐδὲν καινόν, ἀλλ’ ἅπερ ἀεί τε ἄλλοτε καὶ ἐν τῷ παρεληλυθότι λόγῳ οὐδὲν πέπαυμαι λέγων, 100b1-3). Let us call this version of the hypothesis of the Forms the Hypothesis of Mere Existence.¹⁶³

However, Socrates goes on to say something new about these Forms immediately afterward. He says that the “next” (ἐξῆς, 100c3) thing to consider is whether the forms are also causes: “It seems to me, if there is something else beautiful—in addition to the Beautiful itself—it is not on account of any other thing that it is beautiful except because it participates in that Beautiful, and I speak of all things in this way. Do you grant this sort of cause? (φαίνεται γάρ μοι, εἴ τί ἐστιν ἄλλο καλὸν πλὴν αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, οὐδὲ δι’ ἐν ἄλλο καλὸν εἶναι ἢ διότι μετέχει ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ: καὶ πάντα δὴ οὕτως λέγω. τῇ τοιαύτῃ αἰτία συγχωρεῖς; 100c4-7). Socrates claims that declaring the Forms to be causes of particular instances is the “safe” and “safest” way to answer

¹⁶² Cf. Bluck 1955: “No doubt each hypothesis must imply an existential proposition, but such a proposition could not be meaningfully made unless it was accompanied by a notion of the nature of the Form concerned” (163).

¹⁶³ While many scholars accept this interpretation (e.g., Hackforth, Robinson), Bluck 1957 is somewhat unique in insisting that the hypothesis of the Forms cannot be the “general” one “that there are Forms,” but rather that “all this [100a-101d] is concerned with establishing notions of particular Form-causes” (23). However, Bluck’s interpretation of 100a-101d rests entirely on the ideas that (a) 100a and 101d describe different methods, the former Socratic and the latter Platonic, and that (b) 101d is merely a “preliminary matter necessary for the final proof of immortality” (25).

questions about cause (ἀσφαλής, 100e1; ἀσφαλέστατος, 100d8, ἀσφαλής, 101d2), capable of assuaging the “fear” (φόβος, 101b8) that arises from other sorts of explanations.¹⁶⁴ Shortly afterward, he urges his interlocutors to answer questions about the causes of things by “clinging to the safety of the hypothesis” (ἐχόμενος ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀσφαλοῦς τῆς ὑποθέσεως, 101d2), which in this case, must be not the Hypothesis of Mere Existence, but a hypothesis that also includes the fact that Forms are causes.

There has been much debate over what exactly the hypothesis of the Forms is, and in particular, whether it is something along the lines of the Hypothesis of Mere Existence, or whether it includes some notion of the Forms as causes. Those who argue that the hypothesis of the Forms does not include their causal nature still grant that their causal nature follows almost immediately from the Hypothesis of Mere Existence, but they believe Socrates does not count the idea of Forms as causes among those included in the hypothesis of the Forms. They cite, for instance, the fact that Socrates introduces the idea that Forms are causes separately from the idea that they exist, and that he separates his assertion that Forms are causes from his assertion that they exist with ἐξῆς (100c3). Others believe that what Socrates is here making explicit about the causal nature of the Forms was included in the ‘hypothesis of the Forms’ all along.¹⁶⁵ For the present purpose, however, this debate can be sidestepped entirely, since I am claiming only that between 100b and 101d, there is a shift in how Socrates articulates the hypothesis of the Forms. Whether he is adding something new to the hypothesis of the Forms or simply making it more explicit when he says that Forms are

¹⁶⁴ In the same vein, Socrates uses φοβέω (101a5, 101b5, 101c) to describe the feeling one gets from other sorts of explanations, as well as εὐλαβέομαι (101c1).

¹⁶⁵ I suspect that this is true; it is difficult to see what is meant by ‘there are Forms’ or even ‘there is a Form Bigness’ unless this includes the fact that the Forms are *causes of* particulars’ participation in them.

causes makes no difference here.¹⁶⁶ Socrates did not rely on the causal aspect of the Forms in any of his previous arguments, but the causal aspect will be an important part of the hypothesis in Socrates' Final Argument, so it is important for him to articulate this aspect of the Forms at this point.

Socrates describes how a hypothesis such as the hypothesis of the Forms can help one discover the causes of various phenomena:

Hypothesizing on each occasion the theory¹⁶⁷ that I judge to be strongest,¹⁶⁸ those things that seem to me to be in agreement with this, I put down as being true, both about causes and about all other things, while those things that do not [seem to me to be in agreement], [I put down] as being not true.

ὑποθέμενος ἐκάστοτε λόγον ὃν ἂν κρίνω ἐρρωμένεστατον εἶναι, ἃ μὲν ἂν μοι δοκῇ τοῦτῳ συμφωνεῖν τίθημι ὡς ἀληθῆ ὄντα, καὶ περὶ αἰτίας καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων ὄντων, ἃ δ' ἂν μὴ, ὡς οὐκ ἀληθῆ. (100a3-7)

This passage is vexing to scholars because it seems to raise more questions than it answers, but for the most part, we are concerned here only with what it means to be “in agreement with” a hypothesis, and whether Socrates is actually suggesting that ‘agreement’ with a hypothesis is enough reason for accepting propositions as true. The aim is to find a way of interpreting the idea of “being in agreement with” (συμφωνεῖν) that doesn’t make for, as Gallop puts it, “quite inadequate ground” for accepting propositions as true. Although there are two general approaches

¹⁶⁶ Perhaps Socrates' reference to *multiple* hypotheses at 107b would suggest that causality is a separate hypothesis. On the other hand, as Gallop notes, the idea of Forms as causes “is evidently inseparable from [the Hypothesis of Mere Existence], being integral to the Theory of Forms itself. And if it is taken to form part of ‘the strongest *logos*,’ it will explain why the *logos* is ‘strongest’” (179). Surely Gallop and others are right to claim that the Hypothesis of Mere Existence lacks the explanatory power that Socrates is here seeking. See also fn. 156.

¹⁶⁷ As for the nature of this λόγος, varying interpretations track how one interprets the hypothesis of the Forms. Bluck, who believes the hypothesis of the Forms is not a general one but a collection of particular “Form-causes,” believes that these ‘Platonic’ hypotheses are meant to replace ‘Socratic’ definitions. He thus reads the λόγοι referred to here as Socratic definitions, while reading the hypotheses of 101d (qtd. in the following paragraph) as the Platonic hypotheses ([1955] 165-6). This seems to be a rather difficult position to defend, however, considering that the object of ὑποθέμενος is λόγον, which connects rather than separates the two concepts. In addition, reading the hypotheses of 100a as so vastly different from those referred to at 101d requires a fair bit of acrobatics, including allowing a system of Forms in which some are ‘causes’ of others (170).

¹⁶⁸ Alternatively, “most powerful” or “in the best health” (LSJ A).

to understanding συμφωνεῖν here—either to be ‘consistent’ with or to be ‘inferable from’—neither by itself solves the problem. For even if we take the stronger claim that being ‘in agreement’ means being ‘inferable from,’ this would still not provide adequate ground for claiming that whatever is inferable from any given hypothesis is true. If Socrates is not saying something quite illogical, then, there must be something special about the hypotheses Socrates is talking about, such that there *is*, in fact, good reason to take whatever is in agreement with them as true. Gallop notes that “‘hypotheses’ need not be hypotheses in the modern sense, i.e., explanatory theories as yet unconfirmed. Nor need they be ‘hypothetical’ in the sense of being conditional in form, though they may need to be supported by argument” (179). It also does not seem that the hypotheses Socrates speaks of here are the same sort as those the mathematicians are said in *Republic* to use, which are not given any account because they are thought to be “clear to all.”¹⁶⁹ Rather, Socrates begins his explanation by saying that he hypothesizes “the theory that I judge to be strongest” (λόγον ὃν ἂν κρίνω ἔρρωμένεστατον εἶναι, 100a4), indicating that these hypotheses have *already* been through some level of scrutiny or examination. The example we are given is the hypothesis of the Forms, a hypothesis which Socrates often discusses, he says,¹⁷⁰ and which he uses to demonstrate the truth of other propositions. Such hypotheses give good reason for believing the propositions that are in agreement with them precisely because those hypotheses have already been deemed ‘strongest.’ Plass suggests that such a hypothesis should be considered a “uniquely valid

¹⁶⁹ Socrates says of the mathematicians’ method of hypothesis: “I think you know that those engaging in geometry and calculation and such things presuppose the odd and the even and the shapes and the three forms of angles and other things related to these in each investigation. Taking these things as though they are known, they make these into hypotheses, yet they think it worthy (ἀξιούσι) of giving no account of them either to themselves or others, as though these things are clear to all” (οἶμαι γάρ σε εἶδέναι ὅτι οἱ περὶ τὰς γεωμετρίας τε καὶ λογισμοὺς καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα πραγματευόμενοι, ὑποθέμενοι τό τε περιττὸν καὶ τὸ ἄρτιον καὶ τὰ σχήματα καὶ γωνιῶν τριττὰ εἶδη καὶ ἄλλα τούτων ἀδελφὰ καθ’ ἐκάστην μέθοδον, ταῦτα μὲν ὡς εἰδότες, ποιησάμενοι ὑποθέσεις αὐτά, οὐδένα λόγον οὔτε αὐτοῖς οὔτε ἄλλοις ἔτι ἀξιούσι περὶ αὐτῶν διδόναι ὡς παντὶ φανερόν, ἐκ τούτων δ’ ἀρχόμενοι τὰ λοιπὰ ἤδη διεξιόντες τελευτῶσιν ὁμολογουμένως ἐπὶ τοῦτο οὗ ἂν ἐπὶ σκέψιν ὁρμήσωσι, *Republic* 510c-d)

¹⁷⁰ 100b, qtd. above in section 3.2.

proposition which determines the truth or falsity of a wide range of other propositions” and “not tentative at all” (108). If there is good reason to believe such a hypothesis, there will be good reason also to believe what is in harmony with that hypothesis.

Of course, even the strongest hypothesis is not guaranteed to be correct, and it must be subject to thorough examination. Still, Socrates says, there is some end to the examination that is required; once the content of a hypothesis has been ‘divided sufficiently’ and ‘followed down as far as possible,’ there is no reason to seek further justification for the hypothesis:

You say rightly that the first hypotheses,¹⁷¹ even if they are believable to us, nevertheless are to be examined more clearly: and if you divide them sufficiently, as I think, you will follow the argument, down as far as absolutely possible for a man to pursue: and should this very thing become sure, you would seek nothing further.

εὖ λέγεις καὶ τὰς γε ὑποθέσεις τὰς πρώτας, καὶ εἰ πισταὶ ὑμῖν εἰσιν, ὅμως ἐπισκεπτέαι σαφέστερον: καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὰς ἱκανῶς διέλητε, ὥς ἐγῶμαι, ἀκολουθήσετε τῷ λόγῳ, καθ’ ὅσον δυνατόν μάλιστα ἄνθρωπῳ ἐπακολουθῆσαι: κὰν τοῦτο αὐτὸ σαφὲς γένηται, οὐδὲν ζητήσετε περαιτέρω. (107b5-9)

It is notable that a hypothesis is to be examined by ‘dividing’ it and ‘following the argument down,’ since this presumably refers to what the hypothesis entails, or at least what was suggested at 100a5 (qtd. in previous paragraph), what “is in agreement with” (συμφωνεῖν) the hypothesis. In order to examine a hypothesis, we are not to try to justify it through some higher hypothesis but through what is downstream from it.¹⁷² It is striking, too, that Socrates says so strongly that this descending examination is sufficient: “you would seek nothing further” if “this very thing should become sure.” There is a clear and final end to the examination, at which point no further justification for the hypothesis is required.

¹⁷¹ “‘Hypotheses’ (plural) could refer to the Theory [of Forms] alone, the positing of each Form being thought of as a separate hypothesis” (Gallop 1975, 222). See also fn. 151.

¹⁷² Burnet notes: “The ὑπόθεσις is first tested by seeing whether it is verified or not in particular instances; the deduction of the ὑπόθεσις from a higher one is another matter, which must be kept distinct” (1911, 113).

The way that ‘following an argument down’ can help to justify the hypothesis on which the argument rests is somewhat clarified in the following passage. While Socrates said at 100a5 that the propositions stemming from a hypothesis have to be ‘in agreement with’ the hypothesis itself, he also says they must be in agreement with one another (101d, qtd. below in this paragraph). The way to see whether such propositions are in agreement with one another is to ‘follow the argument down’ to what comes from it (ὁρμηθέντα) to see whether these things agree or disagree with one another. If they do not agree, the hypothesis must be abandoned or revised in an attempt to find a true hypothesis that will not produce contradictory outcomes. This is the process for examining a hypothesis to see whether we should assent to it, Socrates says. On the other hand, if we must *justify* a hypothesis, we will need to ascend from our original hypothesis to a higher one:

But if someone should withhold assent from¹⁷³ the hypothesis itself, you would bid him goodbye and would not answer¹⁷⁴ until you had examined what comes forth from it—if they seem to you to be in agreement or disagreement with one another. Then, were it necessary for you to give an account of the [hypothesis] itself, you would give it in the same way, hypothesizing another hypothesis—whichever among the higher ones seems best—until you should come to something sufficient...

εἰ δέ τις αὐτῆς τῆς ὑποθέσεως ἔχοιτο, χαίρειν ἐώης ἂν καὶ οὐκ ἀποκρίναιτο ἕως ἂν τὰ ἀπ’ ἐκείνης ὁρμηθέντα σκέψαιτο εἴ σοι ἀλλήλοις συμφωνεῖ ἢ διαφωνεῖ: ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐκείνης αὐτῆς δεοί σε διδόναι λόγον, ὡσαύτως ἂν διδοίης, ἄλλην αὖ ὑπόθεσιν ὑποθέμενος ἥτις τῶν ἄνωθεν βελτίστη φαίνοιτο, ἕως ἐπὶ τι ἰκανὸν ἔλθοις... (101d3-9)

¹⁷³ Over the translation of ἔχοιτο here much ink has been spilt. Rowe explains the issue nicely: “scholars have generally supposed the reference to be to an objector, and have therefore either taken ἔχεσθαι here in the sense of ‘attack’ ... or—since the change in meaning from d2 ἐχόμενος would be harsh—accepted the emendation ἐφοίτο, but without enthusiasm” (247). Some scholars have taken the approach of attempting to understand ἔχοιτο in the passage in its more typical sense, translating with the likes of “hold fast to,” and they argue that a hypothesis is to be examined even if it is accepted by someone. While this is certainly true (cf. 107b), I believe it makes more sense in this particular context to interpret ἔχοιτο as some form of lack of assent, and have here translated it in accordance with LSJ II.10 (c. gen. *rei*), “keep back from” and II.11 “withhold.”

¹⁷⁴ Alternatively, “defend [it]” (LSJ IV.2).

This passage raises questions quite similar to those of 100a (qtd. and discussed earlier in this section), namely, how ‘what comes forth’ (ὁρμηθέντα) from a hypothesis might ‘agree’ (συμφωνέω) with one another, and in what way this agreement would help to guarantee the truth of the hypothesis. Presumably, ὁρμηθέντα that are in agreement with one another will indicate that the hypothesis is (so far, at least) felicitous, while if we find that the ὁρμηθέντα disagree, we will need to abandon or revise the original hypothesis.¹⁷⁵ Here, just as in 107b (qtd. and discussed earlier in this section), it is clear that one must descend to examine ὁρμηθέντα of a hypothesis before answering to the truth of the hypothesis, and that such an examination would provide greater confidence in the hypothesis itself, if indeed the ὁρμηθέντα agree. At the same time, we can ascend from a hypothesis to a higher one in order to give an account of the lower hypothesis.

When it comes to giving an account (λόγος) of a hypothesis, we are to give it ‘in the same way’ (ὡσαύτως), namely, by hypothesizing whichever of the higher hypotheses seems best, until we arrive at something ‘sufficient.’ If we are to turn to a ‘higher’ hypothesis and give an account ‘in the same way,’ this must mean that our previous (‘lower’) hypothesis has now become one of the ὁρμηθέντα from the higher hypothesis that we are to examine. The previous, ‘lower’ hypothesis must now be examined both for agreement with other hypotheses on its same ‘level’ and for agreement with the ‘higher’ hypothesis. This is to be done “until you should come to something sufficient” (ικανόν)—and not, we should note, until we arrive at something ‘true,’ ‘sure,’ ‘unhypothesized,’ or the like. Socrates is decidedly unspecific here, likely because what counts as “sufficient” will depend on the context. Since the immediate context is the hypothesis of the Forms,

¹⁷⁵ Gallop believes that the latter scenario in which a hypothesis leads to disagreeing ὁρμηθέντα would be impossible: “If ‘accord’ and ‘discord’ here mean ‘consistency’ and ‘inconsistency,’ how could consequences springing from a single hypothesis fail to be ‘in accord’ with each other? For no single proposition can logically entail consequences that do, in fact, contradict each other” (1975, 189). However, it is precisely the realization that some ὁρμηθέντα are ‘infelicitous’ that leads Socrates to embark on his ‘second sailing’ (cf. 99d1).

many commentators look to this hypothesis as an example of the process Socrates is describing, and they wonder what ‘higher’ hypothesis could help to give an account of the hypothesis of the Forms.¹⁷⁶ But this leads to trouble. Bluck, for instance, laments that “it seems hard to find in the text, or to supply, any ‘higher’ hypothesis to which the [hypothesis of the Forms] is thus related” (190). I agree that it would be difficult to discern a ‘higher’ hypothesis than that of the Forms, and that the hypothesis of the Forms thus makes a lamentable example of the process Socrates is describing. A much more felicitous example, it seems, would come from taking the hypothesis of the Forms as the ‘higher’ hypothesis, the hypothesis that the soul is immortal as the ‘lower’ hypothesis, and the progression of arguments throughout the dialogue as a process of descent and ascent between these two hypotheses.¹⁷⁷

As I showed in chapter 2, the first argument of the dialogue, the AGH, uses the hypothesis of the Forms (proposition 6) to argue that the philosopher should not fear death. But the AGH also relies on the hypothesis that the soul is immortal (proposition 1)—and this is precisely what Simmias and Cebes object to. Since the hypothesis that the soul is immortal has been challenged, Socrates now finds himself needing to give an account of the hypothesis itself (ἐκείνης αὐτῆς...διδόναι λόγον). He does this by seeking a higher hypothesis (ἄλλην αὖ ὑπόθεσιν ὑποθέμενος ἥτις τῶν ἄνωθεν βελτίστη φαίνοιτο, 101d7-8) that Simmias and Cebes do not object

¹⁷⁶ One exception to this is Rowe, who notes that the hypothesis of the Forms was also used in the AA and to refute Simmias’ objection that the soul might be a harmony: “the form-hypothesis has already been applied in the recommended way, since it was used as the basis for accepting the theory of ἀνάμνησις and for rejecting the attunement theory” (Rowe 241). Rowe does not, however, discuss how Socrates has used the hypothesis of the Forms as the Backing for *all* of his arguments in the dialogue.

¹⁷⁷ Socrates does not specifically call the hypothesis that the soul is immortal a ὑπόθεσις. However, he does call a rather similar proposition a ὑπόθεσις when he is explaining to Simmias how the soul cannot be a harmony: contradictions follow “if the hypothesis were correct that the soul is a harmony” (εἰ ὀρθή ἡ ὑπόθεσις ἦν, τὸ ψυχὴν ἁρμονίαν εἶναι, 94b). Both grammatically and logically speaking, if the idea that ‘the soul is a harmony’ can be a hypothesis, it seems that the idea that the soul is of a different sort (i.e., immortal) could also be a hypothesis, particularly considering that ‘the soul is a harmony’ is metaphorical language.

to, and this is the hypothesis of the Forms. Throughout the next three arguments (CRA, AA, FA), Socrates demonstrates various ways that the hypothesis of the Forms leads to the hypothesis of immortality, and in so doing, he examines both ‘what is in agreement’ with the higher hypothesis of the Forms (cf. 100a) and whether the things that come from this hypothesis are in agreement with each other (cf. 101d). In this way, the entire dialogue can be seen to center around the hypothesis of the soul’s immortality: the framing arguments of the dialogue (AGH and myth) descend from this hypothesis to show its ὁρμηθέντα (i.e., the fate of the soul after death and the moral imperatives for life that come from this), while the middle arguments in the dialogue (CRA, AA, and FA) ascend from the hypothesis of immortality to give an account of it through the higher hypothesis of the Forms. This interpretation appears more felicitous than the more commonly held view (the view that Socrates is referring to a hypothesis higher than that of the Forms), both because we get to see Socrates’ entire process of accounting for a hypothesis, and because his account of the hypothesis of the Forms is, in the end, at least logically accepted by his interlocutors.

Such a reading also gives further evidence that the AGH and the myth share a similar demonstrative status, and helps to explain why that status is lower than the proofs for the immortality of the soul. Even though the AGH and the myth have, at the highest level, the Backing of the hypothesis of the Forms, they also rely on the lower hypothesis of the immortality of the soul. These two arguments simply cannot have as high a demonstrative status as arguments that rely solely on a higher hypothesis. Higher hypotheses are necessarily more sure, thus the conclusions that are derivable from them are also more sure. The hypothesis of the immortality of the soul is directly derivable, Socrates thinks, from the hypothesis of the Forms. Thus Socrates can ‘prove’ that the soul is immortal through many different arguments based on the hypothesis of the Forms. However, any argument based on the lower hypothesis of the immortality of the soul such

as the AGH or the myth will have a lower demonstrative status because its Backing is a lower hypothesis. This is why Socrates says he has ‘proven’ the bare fact that the soul is immortal, but he is unwilling to vouch for the details of the fate of the soul after death.

3.3 Conclusion

The demonstrative status of the arguments in *Phaedo* follow a chiasmic structure, with the first and fifth arguments (AGH and myth) having a lower status because of their reliance on the lower hypothesis that the soul is immortal. The second and fourth arguments (CRA and FA) have a higher demonstrative status because they rely only on the higher hypothesis of the Forms, and they are thus able to count as ‘proofs’ for the immortality of the soul. The third argument (AA) also relies on the higher hypothesis of the forms, but its discussion of the experiences of the soul after death (after its initial Claim) prohibits it from being a proof; its demonstrative status thus lies somewhere between the higher status of the CRA and FA and the lower status of the AGH and myth. What this means in terms of the *contents* of the arguments is that the bare proposition that the soul is immortal can be proven, but any details about the fate of the soul after death can be only well-reasoned speculation. This speculation is still well-reasoned, however, because all of Socrates’ assertions about the fate of the soul after death are based on the hypothesis of the soul’s immortality, which in turn uses the even higher hypothesis of the Forms as its Backing. As the arguments in the dialogue ascend and descend between these two hypotheses, we are not only given an account of the hypothesis of immortality through Socrates’ appeal to the higher

hypothesis of the Forms, but we are also able to gain greater confidence in both hypotheses by examining their ὁμηθέντα for consistency.

Chapter 4

In the preceding chapters, I argued that the myth of *Phaedo* can be understood as an argument, because it has an argumentative structure based on the hypothesis of the Forms (Chapter 2), and it has a demonstrative status similar to that of some of the propositional arguments in the dialogue (Chapter 3). Throughout those chapters, I aimed to show overall that the myth has a ‘lower’ demonstrative status—as compared to some of the other propositional arguments, namely, the CRA and the FA—because it elaborates on specific aspects of the afterlife, which cannot be known for sure, rather than because it is expressed in mythological language. No form of discourse that speaks of the specifics of the afterlife will be able to have the ‘higher’ demonstrative status that Socrates affords to his proofs of the immortality of the soul, so there is no reason to automatically privilege the demonstrative status of propositional arguments over mythological arguments.

However, all of this is not to say that the myth operates in exactly the same way as the propositional arguments. The way Socrates intends for his myth to persuade his interlocutors differs from the way Socrates intends for his propositional arguments to persuade. In this Chapter, I analyze the persuasive function of the myth and argue that although the myth shares one of its persuasive functions with the propositional arguments, it also has one of its own persuasive functions that cannot be brought about through literal, propositional language. After outlining the specific contents of the myth (section 4.1), I discuss the range of types of discourse Socrates says are capable of ‘persuading’ (4.2), in order to show that various types of persuasion can arise from different types of discourse, and that the persuasive nature of a myth need not be fully rational or

fully non-rational. In 4.3, I analyze how the myth is intended to persuade on a rational level by giving greater reason for trusting in the hypothesis of the soul's immortality, and I argue in addition that its relationship to this hypothesis further distinguishes it from the other arguments in the dialogue. Section 4.4 analyzes, on the other hand, the non-rational persuasive function of the myth, namely, its ability to 'charm away' the 'fears' of its hearers, while 4.5 explains why these persuasive functions are, within the dramatic setting of the dialogue, ultimately unsuccessful on Simmias and Cebes.

4.1 The Contents and The Character of the Myth

The myth itself seems to begin at 108d, but Socrates gives a 'prelude' to it, which is something like a condensed version of it, from 107d-108c. The myth is prompted by Simmias asking Socrates to explain more about the character of the earth, since Simmias has heard "many things" about the earth, "but not those that persuade [Socrates]" (πολλὰ δὴ ἀκήκοα, οὐ μέντοι ταῦτα ἃ σὲ πείθει, 108d). The implication is that Simmias either has found none of the things he has previously heard persuasive, or else he believes they would not be persuasive to Socrates. Socrates uses the somewhat odd comparison to Glaucus, discussed in section 3.1.5,¹⁷⁸ to say that he will not necessarily be able to speak the "truth" about what he is going to say, but he will do

¹⁷⁸ Socrates says: "It doesn't seem to me to be [a matter for] the skill of Glaucus to fully describe what [the soul and the earth] are; to show that these things are true, though, appears to me to be more difficult than the skill of Glaucus. And I might not be able to, but also, even if I knew, my life seems to be not sufficient in length for the account." (οὐχ ἡ Γλαύκου τέχνη γέ μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι διηγήσασθαι ἃ γ' ἐστίν: ὥς μέντοι ἀληθῆ, χαλεπώτερόν μοι φαίνεται ἢ κατὰ τὴν Γλαύκου τέχνην, καὶ ἅμα μὲν ἐγὼ ἴσως οὐδ' ἂν οἷός τε εἶην, ἅμα δέ, εἰ καὶ ἠπιστάμην, ὁ βίος μοι δοκεῖ ὁ ἐμός... τῷ μήκει τοῦ λόγου οὐκ ἐξαρκεῖν, 108d4-9).

his best to fully explain what he himself has been “persuaded” of. The content of the myth can be roughly divided into two parts; Socrates first gives a description of the shape and features of the earth, including Hades, which then leads to an explanation of how different souls with different characters fare in Hades.

The earth, Socrates says, is spherical and held in perfect balance in the middle of the heavens. Common views about the earth are mistaken not only about its size, for it is much larger than people think, but also about where people are living on the earth. While we think we live on the surface of the earth, surrounded by air, followed by a layer of ether, followed by the heavens highest above, we in fact live in something like the divots of the earth (much like those in a golf ball, it seems). Those who live in Greece live in a divot near the ocean, while other divots have other sorts of characters commonly associated with the varying geographical features of the earth. The divots are all connected through rivers of cold or hot, fresh or salt water, or of mud, lava, or fire. Air, mist, water, and sediment settle into the divots, flowing in and out of each one, constantly circulating. The surface of the earth, on the other hand, is surrounded not by air or ether but directly by the heavens.

The earth’s surface is multicolored, with each region displaying one particular color. Socrates likens this surface to a twelve-sided ball (δωδεκάσκυτοι σφαῖραι, 110b6-7), which commentators unanimously interpret as a ball made of twelve pentagons of leather, sewn together to create a dodecahedron (though because the leather is flexible, it becomes more spherical), which was a common method for creating balls in Socrates’ time.¹⁷⁹ Each region is not only colored differently from each other region, Socrates says, but is also colored in the most splendid and rich form of each color, the likes of which no human being has ever seen. These surface regions are so

¹⁷⁹ Geddes (1885) 165, Burnet (1911) 131, Rowe (1993) 275.

splendid that their colors reflect and refract into the divots we inhabit, creating glimpses of these colors for us to see. On the surface are also precious metals, trees, animals, and even humans—all much healthier, more magnificent, and more perfect than those in the divots. The human beings living there are happier, healthier, and longer-living than we are, and they have direct, face-to-face communion with the gods, since they are living in the heavens. Who exactly these people are becomes clear only toward the end of the myth.

Running through the earth from one side to another, as though a hole had been drilled straight through it, is the region of Tartarus. All of the rivers of water, air, mud, and lava that stretch into the divots flow in and out from this region, and they flow through Tartarus as though it were breathing them in and out. The most prominent rivers in Tartarus are the Ocean, which flows in a circle; the Acheron, which flows oppositely to the Ocean; the Pyriphlegethon, flowing throughout the region with fire, water and mud; the dark-blue Stygian with its lake called the Styx; and the Cocytus, which discharges into Tartarus opposite the Pyriphlegethon.

When souls arrive in the underworld, they are judged for their actions in life, both vicious and virtuous ones, and are sent to one of four places to receive purification, punishments, or rewards. Those found to have lived “incurably” (ἀνιάτως ἔχειν, 113e2) are cast into the innermost regions of the underworld, never to escape. But most souls head to a region in which they might suffer just punishments for their actions and be purified through this process. Those who have shown a great amount of viciousness but are nevertheless curable are cast into Tartarus at first, but tossed back out one year later, whence they flow down either along Cocytus or Pyriphlegethon, in order to pass by the souls on the Acherousian lake. Here dwell the souls of those whom they have harmed, and the souls flowing past on the rivers must entreat and persuade them to permit their entry into the Acherousian lake. If they are at first unsuccessful, however, they are cast back into

Tartarus yet again, and the process begins anew. Those who lived “middlingly” (μέσως, 113d4) dwell on the Acherousian lake, where, once they are “purified” (καθαιρόμενοι, 113d7) and have “paid penalties for their unjust deeds,” (ἀδικημάτων διδόντες δίκας, 113d7-8), they are released. Finally, those who lived life in accordance with what is “pious” (πρὸς τὸ ὀσίως,¹⁸⁰ 114b5) are immediately released from the underworld and led to dwell on the true surface of the earth, where they live in justice and happiness, and among the gods.

The overall character of Socrates’ myth is hopeful and uplifting. The Underworld is characterized overall as purgative rather than punitive, since very few souls are judged to have been so wicked in life that they will never escape Tartarus. The majority, instead, are permitted to dwell on the Acherousian lake, either after they have paid a penalty and been “purified” (καθαιρόμενοι, 113d7), or after they have paid a longer-lasting penalty and persuaded those they have wronged to allow them to dwell on the lake (114a-b). Even those who have committed murder, including patricides and matricides, are not cast into Tartarus forever, but are instead allowed to entreat their victims for entry into the Acherousian lake (114a). Of course, the most hopeful of all fates is that of those who have lived in a “pious” way (ὀσίως, 114b5), who are allowed to dwell on the surface of the earth among gods for the rest of time (εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον, 114c4). This is the eternal life that we should be aspiring to, says Socrates: “But on account of those things we have detailed, it is necessary to do everything so as to share in virtue and wisdom in life; for the prize is beautiful, and the hope great” (ἀλλὰ τούτων δὴ ἔνεκα χρὴ ὧν διεληλύθαμεν ... πᾶν ποιεῖν ὥστε ἀρετῆς καὶ φρονήσεως ἐν τῷ βίῳ μετασχεῖν: καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἄθλον καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς

¹⁸⁰ A recent book by Saskia Peels (2016) explains the complex range of meanings and connotations of this and related terms. She notes that such words were common “evaluative” terms in Plato’s time (2), (and in fact, Plato’s *Euthyphro* centers around a discussion of what the term means), and argues that the core meaning of such terms is “what humans do to please the gods and to give them the τιμή they deserve” (255), including certain interpersonal actions that are governed in particular by the gods, such as honoring one’s parents or one’s guests (256).

μεγάλη, 114c6-9). Even if Socrates cannot know exactly what will happen to the soul after death, he nevertheless believes it ‘necessary’ to follow the path of virtue and wisdom in life, for the sake of ‘great hope’ about what will happen after death. If the soul is immortal, as Socrates has been trying to persuade Simmias and Cebes throughout the dialogue, the soul must ‘go’ somewhere and ‘do’ something after the death of the body, and it seems natural to Socrates to think that the soul’s journey and activity after death will be dictated by the condition of the soul, the condition it is in because of the life it is accustomed to leading. For Socrates, accepting the immortality of the soul should lead one to question what sorts of things might happen to the soul after death, which should lead us to a conclusion somewhere along the lines of the myth he tells: “since indeed the appears to be deathless, this seems to me proper and worth risking for one who believes these things are thus—for the risk is noble...” (ἐπεὶ περ ἀθάνατόν γε ἡ ψυχὴ φαίνεται οὕσα, τοῦτο καὶ πρέπει μοι δοκεῖ καὶ ἄξιον κινδυνεῦσαι οἰομένῳ οὕτως ἔχειν—καλὸς γὰρ ὁ κίνδυνος, 114d4-6). Indeed, Socrates has already pointed out that even if it is a ‘risk’ to believe in the immortality of the soul, nothing but good can come from believing this: if he is right, his soul will be well off, and if he is wrong, there will be no consequences for his soul whatsoever.¹⁸¹ The myth, then, has an overall hopeful and uplifting character. The point is not to fear punishments that might come after death, or to pursue virtue and wisdom only for the sake of a pleasant afterlife, but that a soul in the proper condition will be able to gracefully bear whatever happens to it, be it in life, in death, or in the next life.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Socrates says, perhaps somewhat jokingly, that if his soul is about to die along with his body, no harm will come to him, but believing that his soul will live on will make their current conversation much more pleasant: “If the things I am saying happen to be true, my being persuaded [of them] is good; and if there is nothing for one who has died, I will be less unpleasant in lamenting to those present in this very time before my death” (εἰ μὲν τυγχάνει ἀληθῆ ὄντα ἃ λέγω, καλῶς δὲ ἔχει τὸ πεισθῆναι: εἰ δὲ μηδὲν ἐστὶ τελευτήσαντι, ἀλλ’ οὖν τοῦτόν γε τὸν χρόνον αὐτὸν τὸν πρὸ τοῦ θανάτου ἦττον τοῖς παροῦσιν ἀηδὴς ἔσομαι ὀδυρόμενος, 91b2-5).

¹⁸² Something quite similar is suggested by the Myth of Er in *Republic*. See Section 5.1.2.

4.2 The Range of Rationality and Persuasiveness

This section and the next will aim to more fully explain how the myth appeals in both rational and non-rational ways. A number of scholars have interpreted Plato's myths as having only a non-rational persuasive function. They contend that myth is necessarily non-rational because it appeals to the lower parts of Plato's tripartite soul, the parts concerned with passions and desires.¹⁸³ These scholars tend to conceive of myths as a non-rational *supplement* to rational discourse, because they believe that myths help to move the lower parts of the soul, just as Plato's rational arguments (i.e., dialectic) move the higher, rational part of the soul. Hitchcock and Brisson, for instance, emphasize the benefit of appealing to the lower parts of the soul as a way of reinforcing one's true knowledge gained through dialectic. And Trabattoni believes that the function of myth is to vividly describe the metaphysical reality of something whose existence Socrates has argued for in propositional language, such as the immortal, discarnate soul. One large issue with conceiving of Socrates' myths as non-rational, however, is that there is little to no evidence suggesting that Plato or his characters thought of myth as non-rational,¹⁸⁴ and there is, in fact, evidence to suggest that Plato thought of myth as rational, such as Socrates' occasional characterization of myths as 'proofs'¹⁸⁵ and Timaeus' seeming equivocation in the way he characterizes his myth as an εἰκὼς μῦθος and an εἰκὼς λόγος in *Timaeus*. Furthermore, as Rowe has argued, myth cannot be intended to address the non-rational parts of the soul because those parts cannot be addressed through discourse of any type.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ See, e.g., Trabattoni (320), Edelstein (480), Hitchcock (iii), and Brisson (2004 [1996]), 19.

¹⁸⁴ See Section 4.4 for a discussion of how myth can persuade in a non-rational way, even though mythological discourse itself is not inherently non-rational.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. *Phaedrus* 245b-c.

¹⁸⁶ Rowe 2012, 136, 142-3.

A careful distinction must be made. I believe Rowe is completely correct to point out that non-rational parts of the soul cannot be directly addressed through any type of discourse. Even if we don't want to make the stronger claim that discourse is itself inherently rational (unless, perhaps, someone is talking nonsense), it certainly seems true that argumentative discourse—a category into which I have been arguing the myth falls—is inherently rational. Yet Socrates' suggestions throughout the dialogue that the myth is capable of 'charming away' the 'childlike fears' of Simmias and Cebes (discussed at length in section 4.5) would suggest that the myth is, in fact, capable of operating also in some non-rational way. Here lies the distinction I wish to make: while the myth itself is necessarily rational because it is presented in language, it has the capacity also to affect its hearers in a non-rational way. Its persuasive capacities are thus of two different types, both rational and non-rational. The myth shares with propositional arguments its rational persuasive appeal, but the non-rational persuasive appeal is unique to the myth. The reasons for making this distinction and the evidence for my claim will, I hope, become clear in sections 4.4 and 4.5, which more fully analyze the rational persuasive function of the myth (4.4) and its non-rational persuasive function (4.5). First, though, I wish to make a few more preliminary remarks about the myriad types of discourse that Socrates says can be 'persuasive.'

Throughout the Platonic corpus, Socrates uses the verb "to persuade" (πείθειν) to describe the effect of myriad types of speech—both false and true statements (false: *Republic* 361b3, 391d6, 414d3; true: *Republic* 476e1), speeches ("λόγος"; *Phaedrus* 260b1, 261a4, 271b4), rhetoric (*Phaedrus* 260c7), the poetry of Homer (*Republic* 391a5, 391c1), arguments and accounts ("λόγος"; *Phaedo* 84e1-2, *Meno* 81d), philosophy (*Phaedo* 83a5), and even education ("παιδεύω";

Republic 548b7, cf. *Laws* 720d-e and *Gorgias* 453e-4a).¹⁸⁷ While it's true that Socrates sometimes uses *πείθειν* to describe the effects of non-argumentative speech (e.g., poetry), *πείθειν* also applies to many types of speech that are explicitly arguments or accounts, as well as to those that have a generally argumentative character (e.g., speeches, rhetoric). In *Phaedo*, Socrates speaks explicitly of the CA and AA in particular as capable of persuasion, as well as the myth¹⁸⁸ (in each case, Socrates is either noting that he has not yet persuaded someone or is agnostic as to whether someone has been persuaded). Considering the wide range of speech-types that Socrates describes as capable of “persuading”—everything from false statements to proofs—the term does not appear to carry a connotation of truth or falsity, validity or invalidity, or anything else suggesting whether the discourse can be trusted. In other words, persuasion, for Socrates, is the effect of a number of very different ways of speaking, and should not necessarily be understood as an act of ‘mere persuasion’—as opposed to some better, truer, or more rigorous form of convincing.

In *Phaedo*, Socrates says he himself has been persuaded of the myth four times. Socrates concludes the ‘preamble’ to the myth, which describes the general shape of the earth, by saying “as I have been persuaded by someone” (ὥς ἐγὼ ὑπό τινος πέπεισμαι, 108c7-8). When beginning the myth, he says that while he cannot give an account of what he will say, “nothing prevents me

¹⁸⁷ A debt is owed here to Leonard Brandwood's *Word Index to Plato*, without which my ability to compile this list would have been greatly decelerated. We should note also that Socrates claims in *Gorgias* that there are two general types of persuasion, one providing belief and one providing knowledge: “But both those who have learned have been persuaded, and those who have believed. ...Do you wish, then, for us to lay out two forms of persuasion, one that provides believing without knowing, and one that provides knowing?” (ἀλλὰ μὴν οἱ τέ γε μεμαθηκότες πεπεισμένοι εἰσιν καὶ οἱ πεπιστευκότες. ...βούλει οὖν δύο εἶδη θῶμεν πειθοῦς, τὸ μὲν πίστιν παρεχόμενον ἄνευ τοῦ εἰδέναι, τὸ δ' ἐπιστήμην; *Gorgias* 454e). However, this distinction that Socrates draws in *Gorgias* need not be consistent with the treatment of persuasion in *Phaedo* or in any other dialogue.

¹⁸⁸ Socrates says that if the CA alone has not persuaded Simmias of the soul's immortality, they should then discuss whether the soul exists before humans are born (i.e., the RA) (73b); after the AA, that it will be hard to persuade others if he cannot persuade Simmias that the soul is immortal (84d-e); that if he has persuaded Phaedo of the soul's immortality, Phaedo will not mourn Socrates' death the next day (89b); that if he has persuaded Simmias and Cebes, they will give little thought to his present situation and much more to the truth of the matter (91b-c); and finally, even after the myth, that he has not persuaded Crito that his soul will live on after death (115c).

from saying what sort of thing I have been persuaded the shape of the earth is, and its regions” (τὴν μέντοι ιδέαν τῆς γῆς οἷαν πέπεισμαι εἶναι, καὶ τοὺς τόπους αὐτῆς οὐδέν με κωλύει λέγειν, 108d9-e2). He continues: the first thing he “has been persuaded of” (πέπεισμαι, 108e4) is that if the earth is spherical and situated in the middle of the heavens, it needs nothing to hold it in place—and he concludes his description of the location of the earth in the heavens by saying again that “this, then, is the first thing of which I have been persuaded” (πρῶτον μὲν τοίνυν ... τοῦτο πέπεισμαι, 109a7). This particular instance of “πέπεισμαι,” however, introduces an indirect statement lasting nearly an entire Stephanus page, concluding finally at 110a1. The upshot is that the entire beginning of the myth is steeped in reminders that Socrates is saying what he ‘has been persuaded of.’ As I argued in Chapter 3, Socrates cannot know that what he is saying in the myth is true, because the myth describes the fate of the soul after death, which is something that cannot be known. But the myth has been constructed from a hypothesis that Socrates believes to be true and that he believes he has proven—not just to Simmias and Cebes, but more importantly, to himself.¹⁸⁹ The myth is persuasive to Socrates, it seems, partly because it has this rational appeal; it is a well-reasoned argument that uses Socrates’ ‘most secure’ hypothesis—the hypothesis of the Forms—as Backing.¹⁹⁰

The fact that the myth is persuasive partially because it is based on a trustworthy hypothesis does nothing to distinguish it from the AGH, however, because the AGH is also based on the hypothesis that the soul is immortal. If there were no other way for the myth to be persuasive, it

¹⁸⁹ Cf. 91a7-b1: “I will be eager that the things I am saying seem true not so much to those present, unless that be an addition, but that they seem true as much as possible to me myself” (οὐ γὰρ ὅπως τοῖς παροῦσιν ἂ ἐγὼ λέγω δόξει ἀληθῆ εἶναι προθυμήσομαι, εἰ μὴ εἴη πάρεργον, ἀλλ’ ὅπως αὐτῷ ἐμοὶ ὅτι μάλιστα δόξει οὕτως ἔχειν).

¹⁹⁰ See Section 2.4, where a Toulmin analysis of the myth is given. This analysis shows how the argument of the myth is constructed from the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul, which itself was constructed from the hypothesis of the Forms.

might seem indistinguishable, at least in terms of its persuasive function, from arguments based on the same hypothesis that are made in propositional language. The additional persuasive function of the myth as capable of ‘charming away’ one’s ‘fears,’ however, gives it a second persuasive function that is unique, and which comes about only because of its mythological language.

4.3 A Persuasive Function of the Myth: Examining the Lower Hypothesis

In Section 3.2, I argued that Socrates gives a demonstration in the dialogue of the ascent from a lower to a higher hypothesis.¹⁹¹ Because Simmias and Cebes object to the hypothesis that the soul is immortal when Socrates assumes this in the AGH, he ascends to the higher hypothesis of the Forms in the RCA, AA, and FA, in order to prove the lower hypothesis that the soul is immortal. We are now ready to address the role that the myth plays in attempting to persuade Socrates’ interlocutors of the lower hypothesis that the soul is immortal. This likely sounds like a strange suggestion, that an argument (the myth) is intended to persuade its hearers of the very hypothesis on which the argument itself is grounded. At best, we might think, this would be an instance of begging the question. On the contrary, though, I intend to show that the myth does not *argue* for the hypothesis that the soul is immortal (this would indeed be begging the question, and furthermore, this task was completed by the CRA, AA, and FA), yet the myth is still intended to

¹⁹¹ Socrates explains this ascent: “were it necessary for you to give an account of the [hypothesis] itself, you would give it in the same way, hypothesizing another hypothesis—whichever among the higher ones seems best—until you should come to something sufficient...” (ἐκείνης αὐτῆς δέοι σε δίδοναι λόγον, ὡσαύτως ἂν διδοίης, ἄλλην αὖ ὑπόθεσιν ὑποθέμενος ἥτις τῶν ἄνωθεν βελτίστη φαίνοιτο, ἕως ἐπὶ τι ἱκανὸν ἔλθοις..., 101d-e). For a more in-depth discussion of the significance of this passage and how it relates to the propositional arguments throughout the dialogue, see section 3.2.

give its hearers greater confidence in the hypothesis. This does not create a tension for Socrates because the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul is particularly difficult to persuade oneself to believe,¹⁹² so even if it has been proven in previous arguments, it will still be useful to examine its outcomes.

After all of the propositional arguments in the dialogue—that is, just before the myth—Socrates agrees that Simmias may still want to examine their first hypotheses before accepting the arguments produced from them, but that once he has done so, he should be willing to believe the arguments:

You say rightly that the first hypotheses, even if they are believable to us, nevertheless are to be examined more clearly: and if you divide them sufficiently, as I think, you will follow the argument, down as far as absolutely possible for a man to pursue: and should this very thing become sure, you would seek nothing further.

εὖ λέγεις καὶ τάς γε ὑποθέσεις τὰς πρώτας, καὶ εἰ πισταὶ ὑμῖν εἰσιν, ὅμως ἐπισκεπτέαι σαφέστερον: καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὰς ἱκανῶς διέλῃτε, ὥς ἐγὼμαι, ἀκολουθήσετε τῷ λόγῳ, καθ' ὅσον δυνατόν μάλιστ' ἀνθρώπῳ ἐπακολουθήσαι: κἂν τοῦτο αὐτὸ σαφὲς γένηται, οὐδὲν ζητήσετε περαιτέρω. (107b5-9)

This passage is commonly understood to refer to examining the hypothesis of the Forms, and understandably so, because of its location in the dialogue. Socrates says this just after the FA, which, along with the two prior arguments, was based on the hypothesis of the Forms. So it makes a great deal of sense to think that when Socrates says we should examine the ‘first hypotheses,’ he means the hypothesis of the Forms (and any others on which the propositional arguments might be based). However, there seems to be no reason to think this same process would not apply to any *other* hypothesis that Socrates and his interlocutors are making use of, such as the hypothesis of the soul’s immortality.

¹⁹² In section 4.4, I explain that a ‘charm’ like the myth is necessary for someone to be persuaded of the soul’s immortality. And in 4.5, I discuss at length why Simmias and Cebes are still not persuaded by the end of the dialogue.

If this is correct, then the hypothesis of the soul's immortality can also be 'divided' and 'followed down as far as absolutely possible.' I argued in section 3.2 that this division must be into the various outcomes of a hypothesis (i.e., premises in arguments constructed from the hypothesis), and that this following-down must be a following of these outcomes or premises to a conclusion. If we do this rightly, Socrates says, the hypothesis should then 'become sure' to us, and we will 'seek nothing further.' In other words, if we follow the premises that a hypothesis generates to their conclusion, then, as long as the hypothesis was true to begin with, the hypothesis should eventually become sure (σαφής, 107b9)¹⁹³ to us, sure enough that we will not seek any further justification for that hypothesis. Applying this principle to the myth, then, we find that one (at least intended¹⁹⁴) function of the myth is to give its hearers greater confidence in the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul. The myth is an argument based on this hypothesis, but it is also, in the sense I have been describing, an 'examination' of that hypothesis—one that, as long as the hypothesis is true, is capable of making the hypothesis 'sure' for us. In this way, arguments based on hypotheses aren't merely 'examinations' but also something like familiarizing techniques. By examining the outcomes of a hypothesis, we are able to better understand the hypothesis itself because we understand what sorts of premises it generates and what sorts of conclusions it leads to.

I have now expanded the correlation I began drawing out in 3.2 between the relationship the myth has to the hypothesis of the soul's immortality and the relationships the CRA, AA, and FA have to the hypothesis of the Forms. Each of these arguments (including the myth) is not only developed from its corresponding hypothesis, but each argument also functions as an examination

¹⁹³ Here, σαφής could also be translated 'manifest' (*LSJ* A) or 'unerring' (*LSJ* A2).

¹⁹⁴ Of course, at the end of the myth, Cebes has still not been persuaded of this hypothesis, and Simmias may not be, either. Reasons for this are addressed in 4.5.

of that hypothesis, with the aim of giving its hearers greater assurance that the hypothesis is indeed true. And this is one reason that Socrates says Simmias and Cebes should repeat the myth or something like it to themselves each day¹⁹⁵: such repetition helps to better familiarize them with the outcomes of the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul. Repetition of the myth need not be exact, literal, rote repetition, but would in fact be more like an exploration of the hypothesis of the soul's immortality, which could take slightly different shapes each time it is repeated.¹⁹⁶ In this way, the overall structure of the dialogue *centers around* the hypothesis of the soul's immortality: the RCA, AA, and FA ascend from this hypothesis to the higher hypothesis of the Forms, while the AGH and myth descend from this hypothesis in order to explore its outcomes.

The myth uses the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul to develop an argument that we must take care of our souls both in life and in death. If we recall the Toulmin analyses of each argument in *Phaedo* from Chapter 2, we find that Socrates' very first argument, the Argument for Great Hope, also relied on the hypothesis of the soul's immortality. It was only because Simmias and Cebes raised a Rebuttal this hypothesis following the AGH that Socrates gave the rest of the

¹⁹⁵ Socrates tells Simmias and Cebes: “But it is necessary...to sing a charm to yourself each day until you have charmed away [such fears]” (ἀλλὰ χρή...ἐπάδειν αὐτῷ ἐκάστης ἡμέρας ἕως ἂν ἐξεπάσητε, 77e9-10). The reasons for this are discussed in sections 4.4 and 4.5.

¹⁹⁶ I hope I have shown in Chapter 2 that the fundamental argument underlying the *Phaedo* myth does not require the details of the myth to be accurate. In Section 5.1, I identify fundamental similarities between the eschatological myths of *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic*, and I argue that the similarities among these myths display a fairly consistent view of the afterlife—and, more importantly, of the ethical imperatives that follow from this view. At this point in *Phaedo*, however, the question of how to interpret two of Socrates' assertions remains open: namely, the assertions that “it is necessary to sing *such things* just as a charm to oneself” (χρή τὰ τοιαῦτα ὥσπερ ἐπάδειν ἑαυτῷ, 114d6-7), and also that it would be proper “to affirm confidently ... that these things *or things such as these* are true about our souls and their dwellings” (δυσχυρίσασθαι ... ὅτι μέντοι ἢ ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ἢ τοιαῦτ' ἅττα περὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν καὶ τὰς οἰκίσεις, 114d1-3). It is possible that Socrates is referring to “such myths” rather than “such details” when he says τὰ τοιαῦτα and ταῦτ'... ἢ τοιαῦτ'; however, I argue in 5.1.3 that Socrates presents a consistent view of immortality, the judgment of souls, and the ethical imperatives that such myths display. In light of this consistent view, I am comfortable claiming that the details of each of these myths are not important in terms of the *argument* of each myth, but they certainly have a role to play in the persuasive function of the myth. In fact, we can take τὰ τοιαῦτα and ταῦτ'... ἢ τοιαῦτ' as referring to either ‘such myths’ or ‘such details in this particular myth’ and still find a consistent view across dialogues that, through myth, Socrates intends to convey a certain understanding of the afterlife that

arguments for the immortality of the soul: the CRA, AA, and FA. The rhetorical context thus required Socrates to give reasons for believing the hypothesis of immortality before his interlocutors would be willing to hear what the *outcomes* of this hypothesis are, outcomes that Socrates attempts to describe again later in the myth. Had Simmias and Cebes not objected to the AGH that they were not yet convinced of the soul's immortality, Socrates would not have needed to justify his use of that hypothesis by providing arguments for it; no justification need be given to an interlocutor who already believes a hypothesis. On the other hand, the myth logically requires the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul, since this is the hypothesis on which it is constructed. Here lies the distinction I wish to make: while the myth requires the use of the hypothesis of the soul's immortality, it does not require the specific set of arguments, or any one of the arguments, Socrates provides in the dialogue. The hypothesis might be justified or proven in myriad ways (as Socrates does in *Phaedo*), or it might be accepted by an interlocutor without proof. Socrates argues for the hypothesis in the ways he does in *Phaedo* because of the particular rhetorical context in which he finds himself. In other words the myth is wholly independent from the *particular* propositional arguments Socrates gives prior to it, even though the myth requires the hypothesis of immortality as Backing.

As I began to show in Chapter 2, both the AGH and the AA are similar to the myth in that they discuss details about what happens to the soul after death. In Chapter 3, I framed this same feature as a discussion of the outcomes of the hypothesis of the soul's immortality—in other words, anything that we have to say about what happens to the soul after death will necessarily be exploring the outcomes that follow from the immortality of the soul. In this way, the content of the myth, of the AGH, and of the AA do overlap. Both the AGH and the AA aim to show that the philosopher will attain knowledge after death. The myth, however, goes further than either of these

prior arguments. It shows not only that the philosopher will attain knowledge after death, but also the fates of other souls, and how each winds up with the fate it does. But more importantly, the myth tells *why* each soul has the fate it does, and in doing so, it makes an argument for living the life of a philosopher. Socrates makes this quite clear in his conclusion to the myth: “But on account of those things we have detailed, it is necessary to do everything so as to share in virtue and wisdom in life; for the reward is beautiful, and the hope great” (ἀλλὰ τούτων δὴ ἔνεκα χρὴ ὧν διεληλύθαμεν ... πᾶν ποιεῖν ὥστε ἀρετῆς καὶ φρονήσεως ἐν τῷ βίῳ μετασχεῖν: καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἄθλον καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς μεγάλη, 114c6-9). The whole point of the myth is for Socrates to urge his interlocutors to live a good life, a life of pursuing virtue and wisdom through philosophy, and this is something that was absent from his prior arguments. The AGH and the AA concerned only those who already live a philosophical life; *those people*, the arguments said, should not fear death. The myth goes beyond this in urging those who are not yet living philosophically to do so. The AGH and the AA merely explained the proper attitude of the philosopher toward death, while the myth says: *be* a philosopher. And in shifting the focus from those who are already philosophical to those who are not yet so, Socrates has also shifted the conversation from one about his own soul to one about his interlocutors’. In this way, the content of the myth is distinct from that of both the AGH and the AA. The myth contains a moral imperative to lead a philosophical life that was lacking in Socrates’ earlier arguments.

4.4 A Persuasive Function of The Myth: Charming Away Fears

In addition to the rational persuasive function discussed in the previous section, the myth has also a non-rational persuasive function, namely, that of ‘charming away’ one’s fears. Socrates first mentions the idea of charming away one’s fears after giving the CRA. Both Simmias and Cebes have objected to the Recollection part of the argument because they believe Socrates has shown only that the soul existed before birth, but not that it exists before death. Socrates replies that the combination of the Cyclical Argument with the Recollection Argument (the CRA) proves the immortality of the soul both before and after death, but also that, even if Simmias and Cebes’ intellectual objections have been met, they nevertheless seem to have some childlike reservations:

Nevertheless, you seem to me, you and Simmias, to pleasantly [want] to thoroughly examine this argument still more, and to fear the thing of children, that truly the wind disperses and scatters this [soul] as it passes out of the body, especially when by chance someone dies not in calm weather but in some great wind.

ὅμως δέ μοι δοκεῖς σύ τε καὶ Σιμμίας ἡδέως ἂν καὶ τοῦτον διαπραγματεύσασθαι τὸν λόγον ἔτι μᾶλλον, καὶ δεδιέναι τὸ τῶν παίδων, μὴ ὡς ἀληθῶς ὁ ἄνεμος αὐτὴν ἐκβαίνουσιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος διαφυσᾷ καὶ διασκεδάννυσιν, ἄλλως τε καὶ ὅταν τύχη τις μὴ ἐν νηγεμῖα ἀλλ’ ἐν μεγάλῳ τινὶ πνεύματι ἀποθνήσκων. (77d5-e3)

Socrates is teasing Simmias and Cebes—indeed, Cebes laughs in response—but Socrates also means what he says. Simmias and Cebes *do* want to examine the argument more, but this is only because, after Socrates has just “proven” to them the immortality of the soul, their childlike fear remains. Their view is so absurd on the rational level, Socrates says, that the fate of the soul would seem to depend on the weather. Still, this is a fear that Socrates is willing to take somewhat seriously, because the greatest of all things is at stake. Cebes admits that their fear can rightly be called childlike, and he asks Socrates to “try to change the persuasion of this [child within] so that he does not fear death just as he does hobgoblins” (τοῦτον οὖν πειρῶ μεταπεῖθιν μὴ δεδιέναι τὸν θάνατον ὥσπερ τὰ μορμολύκεια, 77e7-8). To which Socrates responds not with logic or arguments

but with a surprising suggestion: “But it is necessary...to sing a charm to yourself each day until you have charmed away [such fears]” (ἀλλὰ χρή...ἐπάδειν αὐτῷ ἐκάστης ἡμέρας ἕως ἂν ἐξεπάσητε, 77e9-10). A child’s fears will not listen to reason, nor, apparently, will Simmias’ and Cebes’. Nor does Socrates then drop the subject and move on to the next argument; instead, he says they should be willing to search all of Greece to find a charmer to aid them in this, but that moreover, they may want to learn to charm themselves in this way (78a7-9).

This is a rich exchange that begs for exposition. The fact that Socrates compares Simmias’ and Cebes’ fear to a child’s fear of a ‘hobgoblin’ (μορμολυκεῖον) seems to suggest that their fear is non-rational, just as a child’s fear of an imaginary creature is clearly not informed by reason. Their fear betrays a lack of mature, thoughtful consideration of the topic at hand. A child fears a hobgoblin because he has not put in the intellectual work to figure out that such things do not exist, or perhaps because his intellect is not yet developed enough to do such work. In a similar way, Socrates seems to be suggesting that if Simmias and Cebes were to apply themselves and learn to think rightly about the matter, they would no longer fear that the soul perishes upon the body’s death. Socrates does not, however, expect Simmias and Cebes to be able to be persuaded of the soul’s immortality within the span of this one conversation. He says that they must charm themselves “every day” (ἐκάστης ἡμέρας, 77e9-10) until they have charmed away their fears. The fear of death is not a specter that can be exorcised one morning, but a deep fear of what is unknown and seemingly unknowable.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Cf. White: “The...implication is that the fear, although childish, is natural to the matter under scrutiny even when closely analyzed by adult minds of fine temper” (101).

In fact, the fear of death may be something that cannot be completely exorcised, although it can be reoriented in a more appropriate direction. Simmias and Cebes fear that the soul will dissipate and cease to exist, but the real fear, Socrates tells them, is that it *won't*:

Since indeed the soul is deathless, ...the risk would now seem to be terrifying, if someone should neglect his [soul]... And now, since it is clear that the soul is deathless, it would have no other refuge from evils, nor any safety, except to become as excellent and as wise as possible.

εἴπερ ἡ ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος, ...ὁ κίνδυνος νῦν δὴ καὶ δόξειεν ἂν δεινὸς εἶναι, εἴ τις αὐτῆς ἀμελήσει... νῦν δ' ἐπειδὴ ἀθάνατος φαίνεται οὐσα, οὐδεμία ἂν εἴη αὐτῇ ἄλλη ἀποφυγὴ κακῶν οὐδὲ σωτηρία πλὴν τοῦ ὡς βελτίστην τε καὶ φρονιμωτάτην γενέσθαι. (107c1...4, c9-d2)

If the soul ceases to exist upon the death of the body, one's own death is not a proper object of fear, since when we die, we would cease to feel or experience anything at all. What we ought, rather, to fear is the idea that our souls will continue living after the death of the body, and that our souls will not be judged worthy of the most pleasant experiences in the afterlife. At the same time, even this fear need not plague us terribly, since there is a clear—although not easy—path to avoiding such a fate. Just as Socrates said many times in the AGH that one should be hopeful about the fate of his soul, he reiterates this just after telling the myth: “But on account of these things, it is necessary for a man to be of good hope about his soul” (ἀλλὰ τούτων δὴ ἕνεκα θαρρεῖν χρὴ περὶ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῇ ἄνδρα, 114d8-e1). Socrates would prefer that his interlocutors focus on the hope they can have for the fates of their souls after death, but if they cannot, they should at least remember that their fear of death should be directed not toward ceasing to exist, but toward living a life that does not pursue wisdom and virtue. While it is true that neither Socrates nor his interlocutors can know what the fate of the soul after death will be, there is safety and hope in believing that one will be better off in whatever afterlife there may be if one has pursued virtue and wisdom with all his might while living. Still, the conversation has breached the limits of human

knowledge, and it seems that rational argument alone will not be enough to persuade Simmias and Cebes. If they truly want to be persuaded that the soul is immortal, they will need a charm.

Just before the myth, Socrates has given three arguments for the immortality of the soul, and Simmias and Cebes have exhausted their rational objections to these arguments. Socrates has helped to rid them of their incorrect preconceived notions of the soul, yet they are still unable to convince themselves to believe that the soul is immortal. This is why Socrates now turns to a myth: Simmias and Cebes need something that will operate on their non-rational fears about the fate of the soul. At the end of the myth, Socrates declares that “it is necessary to sing such things just as a charm to oneself, on account of which I extended my myth just now” (χρὴ τὰ τοιαῦτα ὥσπερ ἐπάδειν ἑαυτῷ, διὸ δὴ ἔγωγε καὶ πάλαι μηκύνω τὸν μῦθον, 114d6-8). Here Socrates makes clear that the things that ought to be sung to oneself as a charm are the myth he has just told, or things along those lines (τὰ τοιαῦτα), which is precisely why he has spent so long delivering the myth. Even though the myth is delivered in rational, argumentative language, it has the capacity still to affect the non-rational fears of its hearers.

In order to better explain how the myth has both rational and non-rational persuasive appeals, an example would seem to be required. One aspect of the myth that seems particularly capable of persuading in rational and non-rational ways is Socrates’ description of the surface of the earth, which appeals to both the non-rational children within us and our rational, mature minds. Socrates likens the earth to a twelve-sided ball (δωδεκάσκυτοι σφαῖραι, 110b6-7) made up of pentagonal pieces of leather. While such balls could certainly be used in sports for those of all ages, Socrates’ emphasis on the multicolored and bejeweled appearance of this particular ‘ball’ suggests the style of a child’s toy in particular. The true surface of earth is “divided in colors, of which those here [in the divots] are like [only] sample colors” (χρώμασιν διειλημμένη, ὧν καὶ τὰ

ἐνθάδε εἶναι χρώματα ὥσπερ δείγματα, 110b7); the surface is made “from [colors] still more bright and pure” than any we are familiar with (πολὺ ἔτι ἐκ λαμπροτέρων καὶ καθαρωτέρων, 110c2-3), colors “yet more numerous and beautiful than any we have ever seen” (ἔτι πλειόνων καὶ καλλίωνων ἢ ὅσα ἡμεῖς ἐωράκαμεν, 110c6-7). These glorious colors are accented by the precious stones and metals visible on the surface of the earth, which are “more beautiful” (καλλίω, 110e2) than those we see, “bright-shining” (ἐκφανῆ, 111a1), and “great in number and huge and throughout the whole earth, so that the earth is a wonder to see for blessed gazers” (πολλὰ πλήθει καὶ μεγάλα καὶ πανταχοῦ τῆς γῆς, ὥστε αὐτὴν ἰδεῖν εἶναι θέαμα εὐδαιμόνων θεατῶν, 111a2-4). This description of the surface of the earth certainly appeals to the children within us; the surface is colorful, shiny, and like a toy. The earth sounds like something that would immediately catch a child’s eye and distract him from whatever might be ailing him at the moment. But our attraction to this ball is not like the base and misguided attraction to shiny objects that those in the cave in *Republic* are so easily distracted by. Rather, we are attracted to this ball in a rational way as well, since the surface of the earth is the dwelling place of true purity, goodness, and beauty. This aspect of the myth, then, can work both to free us from our childlike fears and to orient our more reasoned attention to what is real, true, and beautiful. We will be drawn to the surface of the earth in both rational and non-rational ways.

If my analysis is correct that Socrates intends this myth to be a non-rational charm as well as a rational argument, it remains to be explained why Socrates does not tell the myth earlier in the dialogue, and in particular why he does not tell it when he first suggests that Simmias and Cebes will need to charm away their fears (77e9-10, just after the CRA). The most natural answer to this, of course, is that Simmias and Cebes are not yet *ready* for the myth after the CRA (78a), but the reasons for this deserve explanation. White 1989 agrees, claiming that “the first argument

[CRA] is not complete as it stands. Socrates does not want to attempt to placate fears of uncertainty [through myth] at this point in the discussion because he knows, or at least senses, that the discussion has a long way to travel” (103). Even this, though, does not give a full enough explanation. In what way is the CRA ‘not complete’? Why does their discussion have yet ‘a long way to travel’? The CRA seems complete at least in that it is a complete argument, and one sturdy enough to have ‘proven,’ says Socrates, that the soul is immortal. If there is indeed some way that their discussion is incomplete, it is not because the CRA lacks logical rigor, at least in Socrates’ view. Socrates senses that Simmias and Cebes want to “thoroughly examine this argument still more” (ἡδέως ἂν καὶ τοῦτον διαπραγματεύσασθαι τὸν λόγον ἔτι μᾶλλον, 77d6-7, qtd. above in this section), even though they are not raising Rebuttals to any part of the argument. Still, Cebes and Simmias are willing to entertain the idea that fear is holding them back from assenting to what reason has told them, and Cebes at least seems to think that what they need is further argument of the type given in the CRA. After Socrates suggests that his interlocutors sing charms to the children within them, Cebes’ response implies that he believes the child within him can be charmed through further propositional argumentation: “then from where, ... Socrates, will we find a good [charmer] of such things, since you are leaving us?” (πόθεν οὖν, ... ὃ Σώκρατες, τῶν τοιούτων ἀγαθὸν ἐπιδὸν ληψόμεθα, ἐπειδὴ σύ ... ἡμᾶς ἀπολείπεις; 78a1-2). The fact that Cebes asks how they are to find a charmer *now that Socrates is about to die* suggests that he believes Socrates to be such a charmer, and that he believes Socrates’ arguments to be such charms. Cebes and Simmias are not looking for a charm in the form of a myth; they are not ready to hear one. As long as they believe that only propositional argumentation can persuade them of the soul’s immortality, this will be the only type of argument they will be open to hearing. The CRA is, *pace* White, a ‘complete’ argument—it is just not yet convincing to the interlocutors in question. The only reason that ‘the

discussion has a long way to travel,’ then, is that Socrates must help these interlocutors get to a place where they are ready and willing to hear the myth, before it can have any meaningful effect on them.

I may seem to be arguing in this section for a somewhat strange temporal progression to one’s acceptance of the immortality of the soul. I may seem to have argued that charming one’s fear’s away must be prior in time to one’s being ready to hear and believe propositional arguments for the immortality of the soul—and yet, we would think the dialogue progresses in quite the opposite direction, considering that all the propositional arguments *precede* the charm of the myth toward the end of the dialogue. Two clarifications are thus necessary. First, I maintain that the dialogue has the temporal progression it has, that is, propositional arguments before myth, because of its rhetorical context. The heart of the dialogue is a conversation between Socrates and his close friends, mostly Simmias and Cebes, in which Socrates is trying to persuade *them* not be saddened by his impending death. What Socrates says is meant for *them*, is in response to *them* and to *their* objections and fears. Presumably, were Socrates having a different conversation on the immortality of the soul in a different context (perhaps most saliently, were the such a conversation not taking place literally on Socrates’ deathbed), the conversation would go differently. Perhaps Socrates would begin with a myth, or perhaps he would speak no myth at all. Whatever Socrates might say in another context would depend on that context, would depend on what those interlocutors are ready to accept and what their notions of the soul are. Socrates speaks each argument in *Phaedo* as a response to a question, objection, hesitation, or fear of Simmias and Cebes. Even in this same context and in this same conversation, Socrates presumably would have argued differently, had his interlocutors raised different questions, objections, hesitations, or fears. The upshot, then, is that the ‘progression’ of arguments in *Phaedo* should not be taken to have some profound meaning

outside of the context of the conversation in the dialogue. The myth in *Phaedo* comes toward the end of the dialogue because that is where it belongs in the conversation Socrates is having. In this particular context, Socrates must first persuade Simmias and Cebes through propositional arguments that their preconceived notions about the soul are incorrect.¹⁹⁸ Only *then* will they be ready to learn for themselves what the soul actually is, including how it is immortal.

The second clarification needed about a possible temporal relationship between charms and propositional arguments is this: there are no decisive indications in *Phaedo* as to whether Simmias and Cebes must charm away their fears *prior to* being able to accept the immortality of the soul through propositional argument, or whether such a charm is meant to work simultaneously with propositional argument.¹⁹⁹ There are, however, a few factors that suggest that a charm might work best when used simultaneously with propositional argument. First, there is the frequency with which Socrates says we should work to charm away our fears: the fact that we should do so “every day” (ἐκάστης ἡμέρας, 77e9-10) indicates that charming away one’s fears is not something that can be done once or quickly, but instead must be done consistently and constantly. If one had to charm away his fears before he were able to believe in the immortality of the soul, it seems he might never be able to believe it. Another reason to think that charming away fears and examining propositional arguments is best done in tandem is the fact that Socrates first suggests charming oneself before he is even finished giving propositional arguments to Simmias and Cebes. Even if

¹⁹⁸ Attempting to rid interlocutors of their preconceived, incorrect notions is a move Socrates makes in many dialogues, e.g. *Phaedrus*, *Meno*, *Republic*. In this particular context, Socrates must rid Simmias of the notion that the soul might be a harmony, and he must rid Cebes of the notion that the soul might perish once it has ‘worn out.’

¹⁹⁹ A third possibility is that a charm alone could persuade someone that the soul is immortal. On such a view, Socrates would have used the propositional arguments in *Phaedo* only to dissuade Simmias and Cebes of their incorrect preconceived notions about the soul, rather than to help construct a correct view about the nature of the soul. It may be that if Simmias’ and Cebes’ preconceived notions about the soul were influenced by myths they have heard throughout their lives, myth would be the most efficient method of helping them to construct a new, correct notion of the soul.

Simmias and Cebes are not yet ready at 77e to hear what can act as a charm for them, Socrates nevertheless primes them at that time for the idea that once their false, preconceived notions of what the soul is have been argued away, they may still need a daily charm to keep their fears away. Accepting the soul's immortality is not a purely rational exercise, but one that involves also a constant struggle against doubt brought on by fear. It takes courage to believe that the soul is immortal, for to understand the soul as immortal is also to commit oneself to taking care of one's soul in a certain sort of way.

The myth is persuasive, then, in two different ways. On the rational level, it is persuasive because it follows a logical progression from a hypothesis that is relatively unshakable. Socrates has shown that what he says in the myth, even if he can't confidently affirm each detail, is nevertheless at least approximately true, because the myth develops its argument from the hypothesis that the soul is immortal. This hypothesis in turn, as I argued in Chapter 3, follows from the hypothesis of the Forms, which Socrates has earlier claimed to be the most firm and unshakable hypothesis of all.²⁰⁰ However, this feature does not distinguish the persuasive appeal of the myth from those of the propositional arguments Socrates makes in the dialogue, because each of those arguments also follows from the hypothesis of the Forms. In this way, the myth shares one of its persuasive features with arguments stated in propositional language. But the myth has also a persuasive function that arguments stated in propositional form are incapable of providing, namely, its non-rational appeal. The myth works on a non-rational level as well because it draws the listener in through its hopeful message and playful delivery. It promises innumerable and incomprehensible goods for those who live rightly, and it entices us with the most beautiful

²⁰⁰ Cf. Section 2.4, which gives the Toulmin analysis of the myth's argumentative structure. There, I showed how the imperative to pursue virtue and wisdom follows from the hypothesis of the soul's immortality, which follows from the hypothesis of the Forms.

features of nature, the brightest of colors, and the most gleaming of precious metals and stones. In this way, the myth works to reorient our fears, in order to focus our attention and efforts on what is beautiful, good, and true. The unique persuasive feature of the myth is its ability to charm us in this way.

4.5 The (Infelicitous) Persuasion of Simmias and Cebes

Plenty of commentators have pointed out problems with the propositional arguments Socrates gives in *Phaedo*. At best, they are weak or unpersuasive; at worst, invalid or unsound. Those who wish to focus on such features of the arguments will not be at all surprised to find that Socrates has not managed to persuade Simmias and Cebes by the end of the dialogue. However, if we focus only on the weakness or formal structure of the arguments, we may lose sight of the fact that after the FA, Simmias and Cebes seem unable to come up with any logical objections to Socrates' arguments. The question then naturally arises: why are Simmias and Cebes not persuaded by Socrates' arguments?

To answer this question, one final point about the exchange at 77d-e will require explication, and that is the idea that the best charmer one might find is oneself. Recall that when Socrates first suggests that Cebes should sing a charm to himself each day, and Cebes asks where to find such a charmer, Socrates replies:

Greece is vast ... in it, somewhere, there are good men, also there are many races of barbarians, all of whom it is necessary to search when seeking such a charmer, sparing neither money nor toil, since there is not anything more appropriate on which you might spend your money. It is necessary to seek also by yourselves, in

company with one another; for equally you might find no one more easily able to do this than yourselves.

πολλή μὲν ἢ Ἑλλάς, ... ἐν ἧ ἔνεισί που ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ τὰ τῶν βαρβάρων γένη, οὓς πάντας χρὴ διερευνᾶσθαι ζητοῦντας τοιοῦτον ἐπιδόον, μήτε χρημάτων φειδομένους μήτε πόνων, ὥς οὐκ ἔστιν εἰς ὅτι ἂν εὐκαιρότερον ἀναλίσκοιτε χρήματα. ζητεῖν δὲ χρὴ καὶ αὐτοὺς μετ' ἀλλήλων: ἴσως γὰρ ἂν οὐδὲ ῥαδίως εὔροιτε μᾶλλον ὑμῶν δυναμένους τοῦτο ποιεῖν. (78a3-9)

It is contestable how authentically Socrates means the first part of this statement, because of its references to barbarians and to money in particular.²⁰¹ Even if, however, Socrates is serious in suggesting that one ought search all of Hellas and spare no expense looking for a proper charmer, this would demonstrate only the great importance of the task at hand.²⁰² Regardless, Socrates gives the distinct impression that the latter part of his statement is truly to be heeded: he tells Simmias and Cebes to seek ‘by yourselves, in company with one another,’ since ‘you might find no one more easily able to do this than yourselves.’ It might seem ambiguous here as to whether Socrates is addressing Simmias and Cebes collectively or individually but at the same time, because each reference to them is in the plural (αὐτοὺς, ἀλλήλων, εὔροιτε, ὑμῶν, δυναμένους).²⁰³ This would have repercussions for the question as to whether Simmias and Cebes must look for a charmer in their individual selves alone, or whether they might look for a charmer in one another. We might be tempted to think Socrates is urging Simmias and Cebes to be charmers for one another because he says these things about where to find a charmer in response to Cebes’ insinuation that Socrates has been their charmer up until now (78a, qtd. above at 4.5). But it seems that Cebes is mistaken

²⁰¹ While Burnet takes Socrates to here be referencing the Thracians and Phrygians in particular (64), Geddes does not see room for such a generous reading: “Notwithstanding this gleam of generosity toward the non-Hellenic nations, there is at the same time a feeling that there is from them small hope, and that the truth will either be found at Athens, or not at all” (66). Rowe sees little reason for taking the reference to barbarians with much sincerity because of the immediately following reference to money, noting that “Socrates has little regard for those who expect payment in return for their wisdom” (180).

²⁰² Cf. White, who claims that Socrates’ statement implies “a certain sameness of character... throughout all humanity” (103).

²⁰³ Socrates references them in the plural also when he suggests they should charm the child within them each day “until you have charmed away [such fears]” (ἔως ἂν ἐξέπασητε, 77e10, qtd. above in 4.4).

about Socrates' role, and that Simmias and Cebes must play this role for themselves. The idea that Simmias and Cebes must seek a charmer αὐτοὺς μετ' ἀλλήλων suggests that they can act only as their own individual charmer, even if this will be easier in one another's company. And this is confirmed in the two instances where Socrates says directly that it is necessary to charm oneself: both times the "self" is singular (χρή, ... ἐπάδειν αὐτῷ ἐκάστης ἡμέρας ἕως ἂν ἐξεπάσητε, 77e9-10; χρή τὰ τοιαῦτα ὥσπερ ἐπάδειν ἑαυτῷ, 114d6-7). One can use another to *help* charm himself into believing that the soul is immortal, but succeeding in charming oneself is the ultimate responsibility of each individual person. You could search all of Greece and all the barbarian lands, and still you will not be looking in the right place.

One must be one's own charmer about the fate of the soul after death because the subject matter at hand is beyond the realm of human knowledge. If Socrates' only point were the bare fact of the immortality of the soul, he would have had no need for the myth, having proven this to Simmias and Cebes over and over again throughout the dialogue. But Socrates does not just want his interlocutors to believe that the soul is immortal, he wants them to understand what implications this has for how they should be living their lives. This is not something he can prove to them, nor is it something he can even claim to know. He has done for his interlocutors everything he can on the rational level by showing them how the hypothesis that the soul is immortal follows from the hypothesis of the Forms, and how certain ethical demands follow from the hypothesis that the soul is immortal. In order for them to trust this argument, however, and to truly believe it, they will have to *want* to believe it, and they will have to charm away whatever fears might be preventing them from doing so. It is one thing to form a belief about something because you trust someone else's knowledge and account of the matter, it is quite another to form a belief based on someone else's mere belief, when they can claim neither to have knowledge of the topic nor to be able to

give an account of the matter. The former would seem to invite a kind of deserved trust, while the latter does not. And when the subject under discussion is one that involves such a deep-seated fear for so many, it would be quite difficult for belief in someone else's belief to be sufficient for even a remote level of confidence. One must be one's own charmer because one's own self is the only one who can hold fast to a belief in the face of fear, and the only one who can think through the rational justifications for that belief, since no proof can be given.

Socrates knows perfectly well that Simmias, Cebes, and the rest of his interlocutors need to charm themselves into believing that the soul is immortal, so he does not expect to persuade them in this one conversation, or even that he has persuaded them in all their previous conversations. When Socrates is asked what his final wish for his interlocutors is, he replies:

The very thing I am always saying, nothing rather new: that by caring for yourselves, you'll be doing a favor to me and mine and to yourselves in whatever you do, even if you do not agree now. But if you do not care for yourselves and you are unwilling to live precisely according to this path about which we have spoken both now and before—even if you agree to many things presently and exceedingly—you will be doing absolutely nothing.

ἄπερ ἀεὶ λέγω, ἔφη ... οὐδὲν καινότερον: ὅτι ὑμῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιμελούμενοι ὑμεῖς καὶ ἔμοι καὶ τοῖς ἔμοις καὶ ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς ἐν χάριτι ποιήσετε ἅττ' ἂν ποιῆτε, κἂν μὴ νῦν ὁμολογήσητε: ἐὰν δὲ ὑμῶν μὲν αὐτῶν ἀμελῆτε καὶ μὴ θέλητε ὥσπερ κατ' ἴχνη κατὰ τὰ νῦν τε εἰρημένα καὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ ἔμπροσθεν χρόνῳ ζῆν, οὐδὲ ἐὰν πολλὰ ὁμολογήσητε ἐν τῷ παρόντι καὶ σφόδρα, οὐδὲν πλέον ποιήσετε. (115b5-c1)

Like the postscript to so many of Socrates' myths in other dialogues,²⁰⁴ this passage has the rhetorical force of an exhortation, even though it is not said in the imperative mood. Socrates is begging his friends one last time to take care of themselves and to live well. Here, after the myth, he is not so concerned that his friends accept the arguments he has given, or even that they agree to them, but rather that they live in the way that believing the myth would lead them to live—“even if [they] do not agree now.” Socrates says that this is not the first conversation he has had

²⁰⁴ E.g., *Phaedrus* 257a4-b8, *Republic* 621c-d, *Gorgias* 526d-527e.

with these particular interlocutors regarding the fate of the soul after death: he asks them to do “the very thing [he is] always saying,” “about which [they] have spoken both now and before.” Again we have the suggestion that persuading oneself that the soul is immortal can be a slow and arduous task. Socrates does not care at all what his friends agree to at the moment, as long as they learn to take care of their souls, as long as they *live their lives* in accordance with such arguments. Socrates cannot force his interlocutors to believe any of the arguments he has given in this conversation or previous ones. Rather, if they are to believe the arguments Socrates has given, they must rid themselves of false conceptions of the soul, and they must every day work to charm themselves into believing the arguments, in the face of fear, doubt, and competing arguments. All Socrates can do is give them a charm, and hope that he has convinced them to use it for themselves.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the myth in *Phaedo* has both rational and non-rational persuasive functions. It has a rational persuasive function because it is based on a well-grounded hypothesis—that of the immortality of the soul—which Socrates has already proven to his interlocutors. And although the myth itself is a form of rational and argumentative discourse, it nevertheless has also the non-rational persuasive function of addressing and reorienting fears about the fate of the soul after death. It does this by attracting the soul in the way that a bright, shiny object attracts a child; the soul has something of a visceral reaction to the imagery of the myth that directs its attention toward what is pure, beautiful, true, and real. In this way, the myth has also a unique persuasive function that cannot be performed by the propositional arguments in the

dialogue. Even though Simmias and Cebes are ultimately not persuaded, this is because of “the magnitude [of the topic]” and their “human weakness.”²⁰⁵ That Socrates is unsuccessful in persuading them is not a sign that the myth is an unpersuasive argument but rather a sign that each person must charm himself into believing the conclusion of the myth on one’s own. The fate of the soul after death is unprovable and unknowable, making it imperative for each person to develop beliefs about the soul’s immortality on his own.

²⁰⁵ 107a8, 108b1, qtd. in full in section 2.2.3.

Chapter 5

The aim of this study so far has been to show how the myth in *Phaedo* should be seen as part of the overall argumentative structure of the dialogue. This can be difficult to see at first because the majority of *Phaedo* consists of clearly delineated arguments in propositional language that Socrates calls ‘arguments’ or ‘proofs,’ so the myth that concludes the discussion can come off as a last-ditch effort to persuade those present through non-rational means. Despite the initial difficulties in interpreting non-literal or semi-literal language generally, such discourse is still truth-evaluable because it can give an accurate (or not) likeness of its subject-matter. The myth in *Phaedo* contains both an underlying argumentative structure that can be translated into propositional language, and details about the soul’s experiences after death that help to make the myth a vivid image of what happens in the afterlife. It is this underlying argumentative structure, and the fact that that argument can be evaluated as sound (or not) even if the details are not completely accurate, that allows Socrates to call the myth “true,” and for us to call the myth both ‘truth-evaluable’ and ‘argumentative.’

In Chapter 2, I analyzed each argument in *Phaedo* using the Toulmin method, in order to highlight both the hypotheses on which each argument is based, and where Socrates marks a particular proposition as “likely” or hedges it in some other way. The Toulmin method was more advantageous for this task than the common method of informal argument analysis because it shows the *relationships* among propositions more clearly, allowing us to see which serve as Backings or Warrants for others. These analyses showed that the hypothesis of the Forms is used as the highest Backing in every argument of the dialogue, including the myth. Drawing on

Socrates' description of his general Method of Hypothesis, in which he says that we must examine the outcomes of hypotheses in order to be more sure of them (101d, 107b), I showed that each argument in *Phaedo*, because it is based on the hypothesis of the Forms, is also an examination of the outcomes of that hypothesis. And this is why, as the Toulmin diagrams show, the level of 'likelihood,' 'probability,' or other forms of hedging becomes lesser and lesser with each propositional argument. As Socrates provides more and more arguments that examine the outcomes of the hypothesis of the Forms, our confidence in that hypothesis becomes stronger and stronger. Each time Socrates descends from the hypothesis of the Forms to the hypothesis that the soul is immortal, he gives not only an argument for the lower hypothesis of immortality, but also another reason to trust the hypothesis of the Forms.

Chapter 3 examined the language Socrates uses to describe the demonstrative status of each argument, and argued that the Myth has a lower demonstrative status than some of the other arguments in the dialogue not because of its mythological language, but because of its subject-matter. There is a pattern, I argued, in what Socrates calls a "proof" throughout the dialogue, and the pattern is that an argument can be a "proof" if it argues *only* that the soul is immortal, and an argument cannot be a proof if it addresses details about the afterlife. This pattern gives a chiasmic structure to the demonstrative status of the arguments in the dialogue: the first and fifth (AGH and Myth) have the lowest demonstrative status because they discuss details about the afterlife, while the second and fourth (CRA and FA) have the highest status—they are called "proofs"—because they prove only *that* the soul is immortal, without elaborating on the discarnate soul's experiences. The middle argument, the AA, has a mixed demonstrative status because it first proves that the soul is immortal, then elaborates on details of the afterlife. While it may seem strange that Socrates believes he can prove that the soul is immortal, there seems to be no question for Socrates that he

can, even if he cannot know for sure what sorts of experiences the immortal soul will have. This is because the hypothesis that the soul is immortal follows directly from the hypothesis of the Forms, which Socrates characterizes as the highest and more sure hypothesis of all. Arguments that are based on the hypothesis that the soul is immortal, however, are based on a lower hypothesis, and cannot be as sure. These are arguments such as the AGH and the Myth, which have a lower demonstrative status because they examine the outcomes of a lower hypothesis (i.e., they include details about the experiences of the immortal soul). Each of the arguments in *Phaedo*, then, including the Myth, has the demonstrative status that it has because of its relationships to the highest hypothesis, the hypothesis of the Forms, and to a lower hypothesis, the hypothesis that the soul is immortal.

Chapter 4 examined the persuasive functions of myth, and in particular how it has both a rational and a non-rational persuasive function. The myth is intended to have a *rational* persuasive function because it is constructed from the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul. Even though this is a lower hypothesis than that of the Forms, Socrates has endeavored to “prove” it throughout the dialogue, so his interlocutors should have some trust in it. The myth, just like the AGH that began the dialogue, is a rational argument that shows the outcomes of the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul. Having shown the myth in *Phaedo* to hold a proper place in the overall argumentative structure of the dialogue, I sought to recover some of its unique features *qua* mythological discourse, namely, how it persuades through non-rational means as well. Socrates says that the myth is intended to help “charm away” the “fears” of its hearers, which it accomplishes through beautiful and inviting imagery. The myth promises that those who live well will be met with the pleasures of full knowledge and beauty in the afterlife, so it acts as an

exhortation to live well. One must charm oneself into believing the myth because it cannot be proven, nor can Socrates or anyone else know that it is true.

The reading of *Phaedo* I have given here has two advantages over the prevailing views. First, it shows the proper place of the myth in the overall argumentative structure of the dialogue, where, by examining the outcomes of the hypothesis that the soul is immortal, it concludes with an ethical imperative to live well that is not seen in other arguments in the dialogue. It is thus an argument on its own, but still closely related to and based on the propositional arguments that precede it. Second, my reading makes sense of Socrates' description of the Method of Hypothesis by understanding the hypothesis of the Forms to be the highest hypothesis, and the hypothesis of immortality to be a lower hypothesis. In this way, the dialogue as a whole comes into focus as an example of the Method of Hypothesis. Socrates begins by examining the outcomes of the lower hypothesis in the AGH, and when this hypothesis is challenged by his interlocutors, he ascends to the higher hypothesis of the Forms in order to prove the lower hypothesis. Once he has proven the lower hypothesis, he descends in the myth to examine the outcomes of the lower hypothesis once more.

In the following section, I identify a number of both thematic and argumentative features present in the *Phaedo* myth that can be found in other eschatological myths that Socrates tells. Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 show striking similarities among the thematic and argumentative features of *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic*, while Section 5.1.3 begins to address why these features may not be as prominent in other eschatological myths.

5.1 Other Eschatological Myths

I have argued that throughout *Phaedo*, a consistent pattern emerges in what Socrates believes can be proven and what can be claimed about the immortality of the soul: one can prove that the soul is immortal, but one cannot prove specific details about what happens to the soul after death. Socrates aims to prove or otherwise demonstrate that the soul is immortal in the CRA, AA, and FA, which use the hypothesis of the Forms in order to argue for the lower hypothesis that the soul is immortal. Once Socrates has proven that the soul is immortal, he uses this lower hypothesis to argue in the myth that a consequence of this hypothesis is that one must take care of his soul in both life and death. While a full analysis of whether this pattern is consistent throughout the Platonic corpus is outside the scope of the current investigation, some preliminary remarks about the eschatological myths found in other dialogues will help to show directions for further study.

Let us call the two features of *Phaedo* mentioned above—(A1) that one can prove that the soul is immortal, but cannot prove details about the immortal soul's experiences after death, and (A2) that proofs for the immortality of the soul are based on the hypothesis of the Forms, while the myth is based on the lower hypothesis that the soul is immortal—‘argumentative elements’ of the dialogue. And for this brief comparative study, let us add four more argumentative elements evident in *Phaedo* that are found also in full or for the most part in both *Phaedrus* and *Republic*: (A3) the myth follows one or more proofs or arguments for the immortality of the soul that are given in propositional language, (A4) Socrates describes the myth as “true” but qualifies this statement in some way, (A5) the myth is intended to be persuasive, and (A6) the myth concludes the discussion at hand, suggesting that it is some sort of appropriate ending to the discussion.

In addition, we should note three elements about these myths that I will call ‘thematic elements.’ In each case, the myths in these dialogues describe (T1) the geography of the

underworld, (T2) how souls are judged after death and treated differently according to the virtues or vices they expressed in life, and (T3) how souls try in some way to better themselves through purification, knowledge, or some other means. Throughout the rest of this chapter, I discuss these six argumentative elements and these three thematic elements in *Phaedrus* (Section 5.1.1), *Republic* (Section 5.1.2), and other dialogues (5.1.3). I then draw some more general conclusions about the role of eschatological myths throughout the Platonic corpus, while identifying areas for further study (5.2).

5.1.1 Other Eschatological Myths: *Phaedrus*

To see the thematic elements I outlined above of the myth in *Phaedrus*, a brief description of the dialogue and the myth is required. The first half of *Phaedrus* consists of three speeches about love; the first is a speech of Lysias', read aloud by Phaedrus, and the second is a speech of Socrates', in which he tries to make the same point as Lysias, but in a less repetitive way. Socrates then realizes, however, that what both he and Lysias have argued is incorrect, so he composes a palinode to correct their previous speeches. Desire for another person is not, in fact, some awful form of madness, but instead an earthly expression of the soul's desire for the divine, so Socrates begins to explain the nature of the soul and its desires. After a proof of the immortality of the soul (discussed at length later in this section), Socrates likens the soul to a charioteer and winged pair of horses, all of whom are good in the souls of gods (246a), but in human souls, the horses drag down the soul, making it unable to follow in the paths of the gods as well as the charioteer would like (248a). As the soul attempts to follow the gods in their revolutions around the colorless, shapeless, intangible heavens (247c), the unruly and appetitive horses knock into one another and

become maimed, and some even lose their wings (248b). Some souls are better able to follow the gods and are able to raise their heads high enough to catch glimpses of truth and beauty (248c), but souls that are in worse conditions are unable to do this, and are reincarnated as gymnasts, seers, or poets (248d), while souls in the worst conditions are reincarnated as sophists and tyrants (248e) or animals (249b). After each life, souls are judged and either sent for correction before their next reincarnation, or lifted into the heavens to live out a just and happy existence (249a). The truth and beauty that these souls glimpse as they try to follow the gods are forgotten upon reincarnation, but imitations of truth and beauty in the material world will sometimes allow them to recollect them in part, and this the reason that human beings sometimes experience desire for the beauty of another: we see in others imitations of the true beauty that we have forgotten (251a ff.). All of the thematic elements found in the *Phaedo* myth are thus also found in the *Phaedrus* myth. The *Phaedrus* myth describes a basic geography of the underworld (T1), how souls are judged and punished or rewarded accordingly (T2), and how souls strive to catch glimpses of truth and beauty prior to their next reincarnation (T3).

The myth in *Phaedrus* has also nearly every one of the argumentative elements found in *Phaedo*. The *Phaedrus* myth begins with a proof for the immortality of the soul (A3), which he introduces thus:

We must prove the opposite [of what was said before]... and the proof will be disbelieved by the clever, but believed by the wise. It is necessary first to apprehend the nature of the soul, both divine and human, by beholding its experiences and deeds; the beginning of the proof is this: all soul is immortal...
 ἡμῖν δὲ ἀποδεικτέον αὖ τοῦναντίον... ἡ δὲ δὴ ἀπόδειξις ἔσται δεινοῖς μὲν ἄπιστος, σοφοῖς δὲ πιστή. δεῖ οὖν πρῶτον ψυχῆς φύσεως περὶ θείας τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης ἰδόντα πάθη τε καὶ ἔργα τἀληθὲς νοῆσαι: ἀρχὴ δὲ ἀποδείξεως ἦδε. ψυχὴ πᾶσα ἀθάνατος... (245b7-c5)

Language of ‘proof’ permeates this brief passage (ἀποδεικτέον, b7; ἀπόδειξις, c1; ἀρχὴ δὲ ἀποδείξεως, c5), and what follows is an argument in propositional language that because the soul

itself is a first principle of motion, it can neither come into being nor be destroyed, and thus must be immortal (245c-246a). There is a clear indication, then, that argumentative element (A3) is present in the *Phaedrus* dialogue as well, since the myth follows a proof for the immortality of the soul.

Before analyzing the other argumentative elements found in *Phaedrus*, a brief digression that examines more closely the relationship between the propositional proof for immortality and the myth is required. When Socrates introduces his proof of the immortality of the soul in *Phaedrus*, it is unclear whether his language of ‘proof’ is meant to refer to only the propositional argument that immediately follows, or whether it refers also to the myth that follows the propositional argument (ἀρχὴ δὲ ἀποδείξεως ἦδε, 245c5). If Socrates is referring only to the propositional argument as a proof, we have found a treatment of proof and myth about the immortal soul that is consistent with that in *Phaedo*: Socrates ‘proves’ that the soul is immortal in propositional language, but uses mythological language to describe the details of the experience of the immortal soul when it is not embodied. However, if Socrates means that the myth is also part of his ‘proof’—so that his description of the experience of the discarnate soul is also part of this proof—we will have found a different conception of what can be ‘proven’ about the soul in *Phaedrus* than in *Phaedo*.

A number of scholars²⁰⁶ believe that when Socrates says he will give a ‘proof,’ he is referring to both the propositional argument for the immortality of the soul and the myth that follows.²⁰⁷ They believe this because it seems to make the most sense out of Socrates’ first

²⁰⁶ E.g., de Vries (1969) 120, Ryan (2012) 179, Werner (2012) 48ff.

²⁰⁷ One notable exception is Rowe (2000 [1986]), who says that Socrates’ speech “starts with” a proof, though “what follows is hardly a ‘proof’ in any strict sense” (173).

reference to ‘proof’ at 245b-c,²⁰⁸ when he says, “We must prove the opposite [of what was said before], that madness of this sort is given by the gods for the sake of the greatest good fortune” (ἡμῖν δὲ ἀποδεικτέον αὖ τούναντίον, ὥς ἐπ’ εὐτυχία τῇ μεγίστῃ παρὰ θεῶν ἡ τοιαύτη μανία δίδοται, 245b6-7). Socrates says his ‘proof’ will regard a certain type of madness, and how it is god-given and for the sake of good, and his two other references to ‘proof’ in 245c are consistent with this. Since Socrates does not discuss madness and its nature in the propositional argument for immortality, but only in the myth, it does seem that Socrates means for the myth to be part of his proof, while the argument for the immortality of the soul is only the beginning of the proof (cf. ἀρχὴ δὲ ἀποδείξεως ἦδε. ψυχὴ πᾶσα ἀθάνατος..., 245c4-5, qtd. above in this section).

If the myth is part of the ‘proof,’ it may seem at first that there is a noteworthy difference between how details about the experiences of the discarnate soul are treated in *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*: in *Phaedo*, Socrates indicates that one cannot prove details about the experiences of the soul, while in *Phaedrus*, Socrates seems to say he is ‘proving’ what the discarnate soul experiences. But a closer look at exactly what Socrates says he is proving suggests a different interpretation. The proof in *Phaedo* is a proof *not* of the experiences of a discarnate soul but of a certain experience in carnate souls, a god-given madness that manifests as desire (“we must prove...that madness of this sort is given by the gods for the sake of the greatest good fortune,” qtd. in previous paragraph). What Socrates is proving in *Phaedrus*, then, is that desire in human beings for human beings is an imitation of our bare souls’ desire for beauty and truth. The details of the myth—whether our souls make 1000-year revolutions around the heavens, etc.—are incidental to this. Socrates is, after all, saying only what the soul “is like.” While there is not room enough here to

²⁰⁸ Werner also argues that this interpretation displays a concern with the status of language and of argument that is consistent with the latter half of the dialogue (2012, 51-4).

draw out my argument more fully, I hope to have given a plausible reading on which Socrates is not claiming in *Phaedrus* to prove details about the experiences of discarnate souls. Such a reading shows a way that the *Phaedrus* myth can be consistent both with the limits of human knowledge (Socrates cannot prove what he cannot know) and with the treatment of details about the soul's experiences in *Phaedo* (A3).

Let us return to the rest of the argumentative elements outlined above. Socrates does not directly reference the hypothesis of the Forms in the proof of immortality in *Phaedrus*, nor does he do so anywhere else in the dialogue, but he does make clear when beginning the myth that the claims he makes in the myth rest not only on the hypothesis that the soul is immortal (which he has just proven) (A2), but also on the form of the soul itself (a slightly weakened version of A2, one that requires only the Form of the soul rather than all Forms). Just after Socrates proves that the soul is immortal, he introduces the myth by saying he will describe what 'the form of the soul' 'is like':

About its deathlessness, enough; regarding the form of [the soul], it is to be said in this way. What sort of thing it is would be entirely and in every way godly and a long exposition, but [to say] to what it is like [would be] within human capability and shorter: let us then speak in this way. Let it be like the combined power of a charioteer and yoke of winged horses.

περὶ μὲν οὖν ἀθανασίας αὐτῆς ἱκανῶς: περὶ δὲ τῆς ιδέας αὐτῆς ὧδε λεκτέον. οἷον μὲν ἐστὶ, πάντῃ πάντως θείας εἶναι καὶ μακρᾷς διηγήσεως, ᾧ δὲ ἔοικεν, ἀνθρωπίνης τε καὶ ἐλάττονος: ταύτῃ οὖν λέγωμεν. εἰκέτω δὴ συμφύτῳ δυνάμει ὑποπτέρου ζεύγους τε καὶ ἡνιόχου. (246a3-7)

Socrates believes he has sufficiently proven that the soul is immortal (περὶ μὲν οὖν ἀθανασίας αὐτῆς ἱκανῶς), and is now ready to give to Phaedrus a likeness of the Form of the soul. Socrates' myth thus ascends from the hypothesis that the soul is immortal to a hypothesis about the Form of the soul. This ascent from the hypothesis of immortality to that of the Forms, as I argued in Section

3.2, is a way for Socrates to give Backing to the hypothesis of immortality to Phaedrus.²⁰⁹ However, Socrates' myth is not describing the Form of the soul directly, but only 'to what it is like.' Because Socrates is relying on a likeness or image of the soul for the myth, he cannot be completely sure of the details of the myth (A1), even though he is attempting to speak truly.

Socrates states directly that he will describe the nature of the soul through its “experiences and deeds,” experiences that Socrates cannot be completely sure about (A1): “It is necessary first to apprehend the nature of the soul, both divine and human, by beholding its experiences and deeds” (δεῖ οὖν πρῶτον ψυχῆς φύσεως περὶ θείας τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης ἰδόντα πάθη τε καὶ ἔργα τᾷληθές νοῆσαι, 245c2-4). Because Socrates intends to describe the immortal soul's experiences, he will be speaking about things that he cannot know. However, in doing so, Socrates hopes that Phaedrus will be able to “apprehend the nature of the soul” and see the truth in the myth, even if each detail about the immortal soul's experiences is not accurate. There is certainly something true in the myth, Socrates says: “the region of the upper heavens is as follows—for one must venture to speak the truth, otherwise and especially when speaking about the truth” (τὸν δὲ ὑπερουράνιον τόπον ... ἔχει δὲ ὧδε—τολμητέον γὰρ οὖν τό γε ἀληθές εἰπεῖν, ἄλλως τε καὶ περὶ ἀληθείας λέγοντα, 247c3-6).²¹⁰ Socrates does not mean that the soul *is* composed of three parts like a charioteer and two horses—it is, after all, noncomposite²¹¹—but rather that it *feels like* the soul is pulled in different directions by its various passions. In other words, the details of the charioteer and horses description might not be accurate, but the general impression given by the myth is intended to be “truth.” Quite similarly to the myth in *Phaedo*, then, Socrates' myth in *Phaedrus*

²⁰⁹ See also Section 3.2: The Hypothesis of the Forms as Backing.

²¹⁰ When Socrates references τὸν δὲ ὑπερουράνιον τόπον, I take him to referring to not merely the geography or a physical description of the upper heavens, but also the things that take place there, such as the revolutions formerly human of souls as they attempt to follow the gods in their pursuit of truth and beauty.

²¹¹ *Phaedrus* cite, cf. *Phaedo* cite, *Rep.* 611a-b.

does not aim to give a perfect description of the soul's experiences after death (A1), but it does contain "truth" about the nature of the soul (A4).

In terms of the myth's persuasiveness (A5), there are two direct indications in *Phaedrus* that the myth is intended to be persuasive, and not merely an exculpatory exercise to keep Eros from smiting Socrates (cf. 257a). Approximately halfway through the myth, Socrates mentions that Phaedrus may not yet have been persuaded, but regardless, Socrates means to be telling him what is correct: "It is possible that you are persuaded by these things, it is possible you are not; nevertheless, the cause and the experience itself of lovers is this" (τούτοις δὴ ἔξεστι μὲν πείθεσθαι, ἔξεστιν δὲ μή: ὅμως δὲ ἢ γε αἰτία καὶ τὸ πάθος τῶν ἐρώντων τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο τυγχάνει ὄν, 252c1-2).

In addition, Socrates' myth ends with a prayer to Eros that Lysias be turned to philosophy:

Blaming Lysias as the begetter of the speech, stop [him from begetting] speeches of this sort, and, just as his brother Polemarchus has been turned, turn him toward philosophy, so that his lover here will be no longer torn as he is now, but will instead direct his life singlemindedly toward love accompanied by philosophical speeches. Λυσίαν τὸν τοῦ λόγου πατέρα αἰτιώμενος παῦε τῶν τοιούτων λόγων, ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν δέ, ὥσπερ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ Πολέμαρχος τέτραπται, τρέψον, ἵνα καὶ ὁ ἐραστὴς ὅδε αὐτοῦ μηκέτι ἐπαμφοτερίζῃ καθάπερ νῦν, ἀλλ' ἀπλῶς πρὸς ἔρωτα μετὰ φιλοσόφων λόγων τὸν βίον ποιῇται. (257b2-6)

On the surface, Socrates' prayer is for the benefit of Lysias. But Socrates makes clear that the prayer is actually "for the sake of" (ἵνα) Phaedrus' own good. Lysias is not present for any of the discussions in *Phaedrus*, so he could not possibly be persuaded by Socrates' myth. Phaedrus, on the other hand, is present and eager to learn. Socrates wishes to make Phaedrus "no longer torn" (μηκέτι ἐπαμφοτερίζῃ), but "singlemindedly" (ἀπλῶς) in pursuit of a philosophical life. The point of Socrates' myth, then, is to persuade Phaedrus to turn from his love of pretty speeches to a life in pursuit of knowledge and virtue.

Thus ends the discussion of desire in *Phaedrus* (A6), as Socrates and Phaedrus then begin discussing proper composition of speeches and the role of the written word. Just as in *Phaedo*,

Socrates' myth incorporates all of the thematic elements I outlined in 5.1 (at least a basic geography of the underworld or of the heavens (T1), souls being judged, and punished or rewarded accordingly (T2), and souls striving to better themselves before their next reincarnation (T3)). In addition, the myth in *Phaedrus* has a similar relationship to the argumentative structure of the dialogue as the myth in *Phaedo*, since it has all of the argumentative features. In a future study, I hope to analyze the relationship between the argument for the immortality of the soul and the myth in *Phaedrus* using the same methods as the present study. This would allow us to compare the roles of myth, proof, and propositional argument in both dialogues in terms of their structures, demonstrative statuses, and persuasive forces.

5.1.2 Other Eschatological Myths: *Republic*

Another dialogue whose myth plays a similar role to that of *Phaedrus* is *Republic*. The great majority of *Republic* is a dialectical investigation of what justice is,²¹² followed by a proof of the immortality of the soul (608c-612a) and the Myth of Er that concludes the entire dialogue (614a-621d). In the myth, a man named Er dies, but instead of remaining dead, he sees for a few days what others experience in their afterlives, before he himself returns to the same body and the same life as before. In the afterlife, souls are judged upon arrival and sent either to the heavens, or to the underworld for punishment (614c-15a). After a period of time, all souls come to rest on a plane for a brief time before travelling to the spindle of Necessity in the middle of the heavens

²¹² For the sake of brevity, the discussion here must gloss over many subtleties of *Republic*, including its intriguing opening, the story of Gyges, the Cave Allegory (although see Section 1.1.4 for a brief discussion of why this is considered an allegory rather than a myth), the shift from seeking justice in the soul to 'justice writ large' in a city, and whether the 'indulgent' Kallipolis described throughout most of the dialogue is truly 'ideal,' according to Socrates.

(616b-17d). When they reach Lachesis, her attendant tells them to pick from any number of lives whose patterns are scattered before them to examine (617e-18b, 619b ff.) Er sees a number of different souls make their choice, including Orpheus, Ajax, and Agamemnon, whose residual bitterness toward human beings leads them to choose lives of animals, Odysseus, who chooses a quiet and happy life, and an unnamed soul who chooses the life of a tyrant too quickly, before it notices that the life includes many evils (620a-d, 619b-c). After this, the souls travel to Lethe to drink from the river and forget their discarnate experiences before entering their next life. Er, however, does not forget, and wakes up on his own funeral pyre to tell his story (621b).

This mythological ending and the discussion just prior to it have vexed some scholars because it can seem to work against one of Socrates' main points throughout the rest of the dialogue: Socrates aims to show throughout *Republic* that justice is good and choiceworthy in itself, not because of its consequences, but the mythological ending and surrounding discussion concern the *consequences* of justice and injustice. Socrates tells his interlocutors both in and after the myth that they must pursue justice and wisdom in life *in order to* do well both in their lives and in their afterlives (cf. 621c-d, discussed below in this section). This focus on the rewards for justice and virtue has led scholars such as Annas (1981) to conclude that *Republic* has a "lame and messy ending" that is "most very problematic" in light of the rest of the dialogue (353). It thus seems that there is an exigency for finding a way to understand how the Myth of Er connects to the rest of the dialogue that does not make the myth seem 'lame,' 'messy,' or 'problematic.'

The Myth of Er and the myths in *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus* show thematic similarities: they all contain a geographic description of the underworld or the heavens (T1), they all describe souls being judged upon death and sent for punishments or rewards (T2), and they all show souls attempting to become better through purification or through rewards for having lived justly (T3).

In addition, the Myth of Er shows many argumentative similarities to these other myths. The Myth of Er follows shortly after a propositional argument for the immortality of the soul at 608d-611b (A3). In this argument, Socrates claims that if the particular badness for any particular thing cannot destroy it (as, say, disease can for the body, or corrosion can for iron), then nothing can destroy it. Since the particular badness of the soul, viciousness, does not destroy it, nothing can, so it must be immortal. As Socrates concludes his myth, he makes clear that the myth is based on this hypothesis that the soul is immortal; we will do well, he says, “if we believe that the soul is immortal” (νομίζοντες ἀθάνατον ψυχὴν, 621c3) (A2). In this way, the Myth of Er also descends from the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul to the outcomes of that hypothesis. Of course, any discourse about the immortal soul will be based on the hypothesis that the soul is immortal, so the interesting question about argumentative element (A2)—that proofs for the immortality of the soul are based on the hypothesis of the Forms, while the myth is based on the lower hypothesis that the soul is immortal—is whether Socrates’ argument for immortality is, in turn, based on the hypothesis of the Forms. Here, the evidence is much weaker than in *Phaedo*, but a more in-depth analysis would likely be able to show that Socrates’ argument for immortality is indeed based on the hypothesis of the Forms. In this argument, Socrates is concerned with the “natural badness and disease for each thing” (σύμφυτον ἐκάστῳ κακὸν τε καὶ νόσημα, 609a3-4), and it seems that we could not determine what is naturally bad for an individual thing without at least being familiar with its naturally good state, i.e., the Form of it. Even if, however, we cannot make the case that Socrates’ argument for immortality *requires* the hypothesis of the Forms, we have still a weakened form of (A2) in *Republic*, in which Socrates specifically states that the myth is based on the hypothesis that the soul is immortal.

Unlike in *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, Socrates does not claim in *Republic* to have ‘proven’ that the soul is immortal (A1). The closest he comes to this is saying that they ought to believe that the soul is immortal “until someone should prove” the opposite (πρὶν ἄν τις ἀποδείξῃ, 610b4). Still, his argument for the immortality of the soul has a propositional structure quite similar to the proofs he gives in *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, and Socrates does not *break* in *Republic* the general pattern I outlined in these dialogues. Argumentative element (A1) states only that one *can* prove the soul is immortal, but cannot prove details about the experiences of the discarnate soul. This does not mean that Socrates *must* prove that the soul is immortal before describing the soul’s experiences in each case, nor does it mean that Socrates must *state* that an argument for the soul’s immortality is a ‘proof’ even if he believes it to be one.

Similarly to the myths of *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, Socrates indicates that what he will say in the Myth of Er is somehow ‘true,’ even if he will not claim that all of the details are accurate (A4). Socrates *could* not, in fact, claim that the details are accurate, because the Myth of Er is the story of another person’s experiences. Socrates was not there to see the experiences of discarnate souls, nor does he say whence he heard Er’s story. Still, Socrates insists, the Myth of Er allows us to see the truth about the soul. Between his argument for the immortality of the soul and the myth, Socrates explains that the soul should not be examined while carnate, but while discarnate:

Therefore, that the soul is immortal, both the present account²¹³ and others would force [us to say]; but the sort of thing the soul is *in truth* must be seen when it is not mutilated by its association with the body and with other evils, as we see it now. Rather, the sort of thing it is when pure [can] be examined sufficiently only through reason... And then one might see its *true* nature, whether it is multiform or uniform, and in what manner and in what respect it is thus.

ὅτι μὲν τοίνυν ἀθάνατον ψυχὴ, καὶ ὁ ἄρτι λόγος καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἀναγκάσειαν ἄν: οἷον δ’ ἐστὶν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, οὐ λελωβημένον δεῖ αὐτὸ θεάσασθαι ὑπὸ τε τῆς τοῦ σώματος κοινωνίας καὶ ἄλλων κακῶν, ὥσπερ νῦν ἡμεῖς θεώμεθα, ἀλλ’ οἷόν ἐστιν καθαρὸν γιγνόμενον, τοιοῦτον ἱκανῶς λογισμῷ διαθεατέον... καὶ τότε ἄν τις ἴδοι αὐτῆς τὴν

²¹³ I.e., the argument for the immortality of the soul, 608d-611b.

ἀληθῆ φύσιν, εἴτε πολυειδὴς εἴτε μονοειδής, εἴτε ὅπη ἔχει καὶ ὅπως. (611b9-c4, 612a3-5)

When Socrates says that one can see the true nature of the soul only by apprehending its discarnate form, there would seem to be no question that he is referencing the Myth of Er, because this is the only part of *Republic* that discusses the soul in its discarnate form. Thus the Myth of Er, like the myths in *Phaedrus* and *Phaedo*, is also intended to convey truth about the soul, even if its details are not accurate (A4).

The Myth of Er, just like the myth in *Phaedrus*, concludes with an exhortation toward living a life of virtue (621c-d). In this exhortation, Socrates makes clear that he has tried to persuade his interlocutors through rational means to live well (A5), saying twice that if they are persuaded by the myth and by him, they will believe that the soul is immortal and they will act accordingly in leading just lives (ἂν πειθώμεθα αὐτῷ 621c1, ἀλλ' ἂν ἐμοὶ πειθώμεθα, 621c3). It is notable, however, that Socrates also mentions non-rational means of persuasion, and in particular “charming oneself” in connection with the Myth of Er. Just as Socrates says in *Phaedo* that his interlocutors must “charm themselves” into believing what he says in the myth,²¹⁴ Socrates uses the exact same verb in *Republic* to describe how he and his interlocutors must “charm themselves” (ἐπᾶδοντες ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς, 608a3) through philosophical discourse rather than poetry, a comment he makes only moments before stating the myth. In this part of the dialogue, Socrates appears to be giving some sort of vindication to poetry, saying “we will be well-disposed to show [poetry] to be best and truest” (εὖνοι μὲν ἐσόμεθα φανῆναι αὐτὴν ὡς βελτίστην καὶ ἀληθεστάτην, 608a1). However, he says, they must rely on philosophical discourse rather than poetry for “as long as it is not able to defend itself against such [charges brought up earlier]” (ἕως δ' ἂν μὴ οἷα τ' ἦ

²¹⁴ See Section 4.4.

ἀπολογήσασθαι, 608a2). Considering this, the Myth of Er may be something of an attempt to marry the merits of poetic discourse with the merits of philosophical discourse. The Myth of Er is “charming” and persuasive in a non-rational way, just as poetry can be, but it is also persuasive in a non-rational way because it contains a rational argument for living justly.

The Myth of Er and Socrates’ final exhortation following it conclude *Republic* (A6), suggesting that there is good reason for ending the discussion, and the dialogue, with this myth. The Myth of Er addresses the consequences of living justly and unjustly, but these consequences need not be as ‘lame,’ ‘messy,’ and ‘problematic’ as they first seemed. The Myth of Er re-orientes the discussion of justice from a metaphorical or allegorical description of justice in a city to one of justice in the soul. Just as Socrates shifts the conversation in *Phaedo* from the more ‘ideal’ soul of the philosopher to the souls of his actual interlocutors, in order to show them how to live their lives, Socrates here shifts the conversation from the ‘ideal’ of the just city again to the souls of his actual interlocutors. Once we recognize this, it is easy to account for why the consequences of justice and injustice re-enter the conversation: it makes the conversation exigent for Socrates’ interlocutors. If they cannot see the argumentative consequences of ‘justice writ large’ in the city, perhaps they will be able to see the actual consequences for their own lives of justice in their own souls.²¹⁵

²¹⁵ Between the argument for the immortality of the soul and the Myth of Er, Socrates suggests that justice cannot truly be separated from its consequences because a true understanding of justice will naturally include an understanding of the goods that follow from it (612a-614a). Cf. Bosanquet 1906: “the eternal consequences of right and of wrong-doing must be recognized, as to divorce seeming from being was only a (forced) hypothesis for the sake of argument” (409). Cf. also Morgan 2000 for an interesting discussion of how the Myth of Er repays “the debt owed by the argument” of the entire dialogue.

5.1.3 Other Eschatological Myths: A General Comparison

Among these three myths—those from *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic*—a number of similarities have arisen, both in how they relate to the overall structure of the arguments of the dialogues and in thematic terms. In terms of the argumentative structure of the dialogues, each myth follows a proof of the immortality of the soul given in propositional language, each is presented as in some way true and as intended to be persuasive,²¹⁶ and each concludes the discussion of the topic at hand. The repetition of this pattern suggests that eschatological myth has a specific place and role in discussions about the soul for Socrates, regardless of the topic of the discussion (love, justice, the fear of death). The three myths display thematic similarities as well: each outlines at least the basic geography of where souls go after death, each discusses how souls are judged for their choices in life and treated accordingly, and each characterizes souls as needing to strive in some way in the afterlife in order to be reincarnated into a better rather than worse life. These thematic similarities suggest that Socrates expresses, in fact, a rather consistent conception of the soul's experiences after death. Even though the details in the thematic elements of each myth are inconsistent with one another (geographies of the underworld or heavens, how souls are judged, how souls strive to better themselves), the basic ideas underlying each of these myths are the same.

As I argued in Section 3.1.5, the details of such myths do not have to be perfectly accurate for a myth to be 'true.' The details of each myth are 'filled in' by the context of each conversation—whether Socrates is discussing love, justice, the fear of death, or whatever else. But this also does not mean that Socrates invents the details of the myths merely to fit the task at hand.

²¹⁶ While Socrates does not use the word *πειθώ* in relation to the *Phaedrus* myth, it seems quite clear in this case that Socrates means the myth to be persuasive; the whole point of the speech is, after all, to persuade a beloved to grant favors to one who loves him, not one who doesn't.

Non-literal or metaphorical language in general necessarily highlights some aspects of its true subject-matter while glossing over others.²¹⁷ To take Max Black's classic example, describing war in words generally used to describe a game, for instance, highlights only the commander's experience, while glossing over the horrific consequences for the common soldier²¹⁸. Extending the metaphor would fill in only those details about war that are, in fact, game-like, such as making strategic decisions or sacrifices and attempting to outsmart one's opponent. It will still be true that some aspects of war may be game-like, but in describing war in terms of a game, we would certainly leave out much. In the same way, Socrates can describe the experiences of the discarnate soul by highlighting its desire for truth and beauty in the context of discussing love and desire, by highlighting its rewards for being just in life when discussing justice, by highlighting the wonderful existence it will have among the gods when discussing the fear of death—and none of those descriptions will obviate the others. When Socrates 'fills in the details' of the experiences of the discarnate soul in different contexts, he highlights some aspects of those experiences while glossing over others, in order to best fit the discussion at hand. In this way, the myths of *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic* can be seen as consistent with one another, even though their specific details—which again, no one can even know—are not consistent. The details are filled in to suit the discussion at hand in each dialogue, and in each case, they highlight aspects of the immortal soul's experiences that are most relevant to that discussion.

Here it will be helpful to show in relief a couple of Platonic myths that do not fit this pattern, and to hazard to say why this is so. I said in Section 1.1.2 that the implications of my analysis of myth and argument in *Phaedo* could apply only to those other myths that are

²¹⁷ Perelman 1982, 119.

²¹⁸ Black 1962, 42-5.

eschatological in nature, as opposed to ‘traditional’ or ‘historical’ myths, or even other myths about the soul. For instance, in *Symposium*, Aristophanes describes the origins of love by explaining that Zeus once severed human beings in half as punishment for their hubris and wickedness, so the feelings of desire we have today are of seeking the other half of what is properly ourselves. While Aristophanes’ myth regards the longing in the soul that human beings feel for others, it is not eschatological, and therefore has none of the structural or thematic elements outlined in 5.1. In addition, the context for this myth in *Symposium* is not a dialectical argument or philosophical discussion, but rather a jovial set of speeches at a drinking party that would make talk of eschatology quite unseemly.²¹⁹

Among myths that are eschatological, the one that seems to accord least strongly with the pattern I have outlined is that in *Gorgias*. Here Socrates tells Calicles that souls used to be judged just before people died, while their souls were still obscured by earthy goods and evils, so many souls were judged wrongly and were sent to the isles of the divinely blessed or to Tartarus wrongly (523a-d). In order to ensure that each soul goes is judged correctly, Zeus changes the process for judging souls entirely, having them be judged after death, once the souls have been freed from the body and are “bare” (γυμνός, 523e) (523d-524a). Souls are now properly judged and sent to the isles of the blessed or to Tartarus, and some are even put on display as “paradigms” (παρδείγματα, 523e ff.) for others to learn from. This myth does not have strong examples of all of the thematic elements I outlined in 5.1, although they are not entirely missing, either. Socrates says that there

²¹⁹ Socrates, too, tells a myth in this dialogue, but it regards neither the soul nor eschatology. It thus lacks all of thematic elements his eschatological myths share, speaking instead of the parentage of Eros. He is the son of Resource and Poverty, Socrates says, who was conceived at the feast celebrating the birth of Aphrodite (203b-e). Because of this, he pursues beauty, but lacks beauty and other resources himself, relying solely on his cleverness and courage to get by. Even though this is not an eschatological myth, it still has two of the argumentative functions that his eschatological myths have—namely, the myth follows a propositional argument that claims he lacks what he desires and so is neither beautiful nor good (199d-201e) (A3), and Socrates says that his speech (including the myth) will be “the truth” (τά γε ἀληθῆ, 199a8) (A4).

are various paths discarnate souls may take to get to the Isles or to Tartarus but does not describe their geography in detail (T1),²²⁰ and while he says that souls can become better through purification, this is described as a more passive act than in *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic*, where souls are *striving* in various ways to become better (T3).²²¹ The only thematic element that the *Gorgias* myth contains integrally is the judgment of souls (T2), but it is interesting to note that, unlike in other dialogues, Socrates does not say that souls will be reincarnated after their rewards and punishments in the afterlife.²²²

In terms of the argumentative elements of many of Socrates' eschatological myths, the *Gorgias* myth again doesn't make strong use of them, but nor are they wholly absent. Socrates characterizes the myth as "true,"²²³ but qualifies this by saying, "It would be nothing wonderful to look down on these things, if, by seeking, we should happen to discover better and truer things than these" (οὐδέν γ' ἂν ἦν θαυμαστὸν καταφρονεῖν τούτων, εἴ πη ζητοῦντες εἶχομεν αὐτῶν βελτίω καὶ ἀληθέστερα εὐρεῖν, 527a) (A4). The myth is also characterized as "persuasive"²²⁴ (A5), and it concludes the dialogue (A6), suggesting that the myth brings some sort of conclusion to the conversation. The argumentative elements most closely connected with proof and hypotheses, however, are absent in the *Gorgias* myth. Socrates does not try to prove that the soul is immortal (A3/A1),²²⁵ nor does he make any references to hypotheses of immortality or of the Forms (A2).

²²⁰ The brief description Socrates gives concerns only the plane where souls are judged and the different roads they may be sent away from that plane on once they have been judged (524a).

²²¹ "It is fitting that everyone who is in punishment either come to be better and to be benefitted, or to come to be a paradigm for others" προσήκει δὲ παντὶ τῷ ἐν τιμωρίᾳ ὄντι, ... ἢ βελτίονι γίνεσθαι καὶ ὀνίνασθαι ἢ παραδείγματι τοῖς ἄλλοις γίνεσθαι, 525b).

²²² Annas 1982 gives an extended discussion of this (124 ff.). Cf. Arieti and Barrus 2007, 167, fn. 232.

²²³ "These are things I have heard and believe to be true" (ταῦτ' ἔστιν... ἃ ἐγὼ ἀκηκοὺς πιστεύω ἀληθῆ εἶναι, 524a-b). Cf. 523a1-2, qtd. in full later in this section, and 526d.

²²⁴ Socrates says, "I have been persuaded by these accounts" (ὕπο τε τούτων τῶν λόγων πέπεισμαι, 526d). Cf. 527c, where Socrates urges Callicles also to be persuaded.

²²⁵ Socrates does claim in the middle of the myth that death is the separation of the soul and the body (ὁ θάνατος τυγχάνει ὧν ... διάλυσις, τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος, 524b), but he gives this definition without any argument as to why it is true.

Although a full analysis of why this eschatological myth does not more closely follow the pattern seen in those in *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic* will have to wait for another occasion, one possible reason presents itself.

Socrates' interlocutors in *Gorgias* are decidedly antagonistic toward him and his ideas. Polus laughs when Socrates suggests that those who are vicious but go unpunished are the worst off of all (473e), and Callicles becomes so exasperated with Socrates at 505d that he exits himself from the conversation temporarily and tells Socrates to debate with himself. Before Socrates begins his myth, he says plainly that Callicles in particular will not believe it, even though Socrates intends for what he says to be true: "hear a very beautiful account, which you will believe to be a myth, as I suspect, but I believe to be an account, for the things I intend to say I will say to you as being true" (ἀκουε δὴ ... μάλα καλοῦ λόγου, ὃν σὺ μὲν ἡγήσῃ μῦθον, ὡς ἐγὼ οἶμαι, ἐγὼ δὲ λόγον: ὡς ἀληθῆ γὰρ ὄντα σοι λέξω ἃ μέλλω λέγειν, 523a1-2). If Socrates knows full well that Callicles will dismiss an argument given in mythological language, why would he bother to do so? It may be that Socrates has given up, for the time being, on persuading Callicles. Or it may be that Socrates is not mocking Callicles as much as he is daring him to believe what he will say in the myth: go ahead and dismiss what I say, but do so at your own peril. In either case, Socrates' interactions with Callicles and others in *Gorgias* have quite a different character from those he has with interlocutors who are primed to believe him or at least to carefully consider his arguments. Whether this is a complete explanation of why Socrates' myth in *Gorgias* also takes on a different character than those in *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic*, however, will have to be determined elsewhere.

What I hope to have shown here is a general pattern that is present either in full or for the most part in a number of Platonic dialogues that contain eschatological myths, and to suggest that both myths that fit this pattern and those that do not are worthy of further study as to why. In such

studies, I would suggest that we consider carefully the roles of both the hypothesis of the Forms and the hypothesis of the soul's immortality, as well as any other hypotheses that Socrates may be relying on to develop these myths. Analyzing how these hypotheses are argued for in propositional language and how they are used as hypotheses to develop the myths will provide a better understanding of each myth's role in the argumentative structure of its dialogue. Once we have determined this, we will be better able to understand the persuasive function of each of these myths, and to ask whether Socrates' eschatological myths play always the same or a similar function in each dialogue, or whether Socrates uses different myths in different dialogues to different persuasive ends.

5.2 Final Remarks

I have aimed throughout this dissertation to vindicate a certain class of Platonic myth based on its philosophical content and its argumentative capacity. Myths about the soul that are spoken by Socrates are generally arguments in themselves, based on hypotheses that Socrates has argued for in propositional language, that argue for a certain ethical imperative such as seeking knowledge, pursuing justice, or living philosophically. Such myths contribute the overall argumentative structure of the dialogues by showing the consequences after death of following (or not) the ethical imperatives for which they argue. In this way, these myths give an image or likeness of the soul's experiences after death, even though the precise nature of these experiences is necessarily outside the realm of human experience and knowledge. Socrates gives us good reason to believe these myths, however, because they are constructed from hypotheses that he has

shown or even proven to be true through propositional arguments. The fact that he describes the method of judging souls and the method of purification inconsistently across dialogues should not make us question which myth, if any, expresses his true view, but should instead reinforce the idea that regardless of the details of each myth, Socrates means in each case to express a more general and fundamental truth. Souls are judged, purified, punished, and rewarded. Believing in the immortality of the soul should lead us all in some way to believe and to understand this.

I would hope, too, that the conception of myth I have here argued for can help lead to a more nuanced grasp of how Socrates views epistemology. There is great temptation to vaunt the ‘logical’ or ‘rational’ aspects of Platonic dialogues, and in particular Socrates’ methods of definition, dialectic, and collection and division. But we can appreciate the intellectual contributions that the historical Socrates, Plato’s literary Socrates, and Plato himself made in shifting the focus of philosophy from the sorts of causes the Presocratics sought to the sorts of definitions and causes Socrates and Plato sought—and still understand that for Plato’s literary Socrates, at least, myth, allegory, εἰρωνεία, and other forms of non-literal discourse hold an important place in the forming of reasoned opinion on unknowable topics.

Appendix A : Argument Diagrams and Citations

A.1 Argument for Great Hope

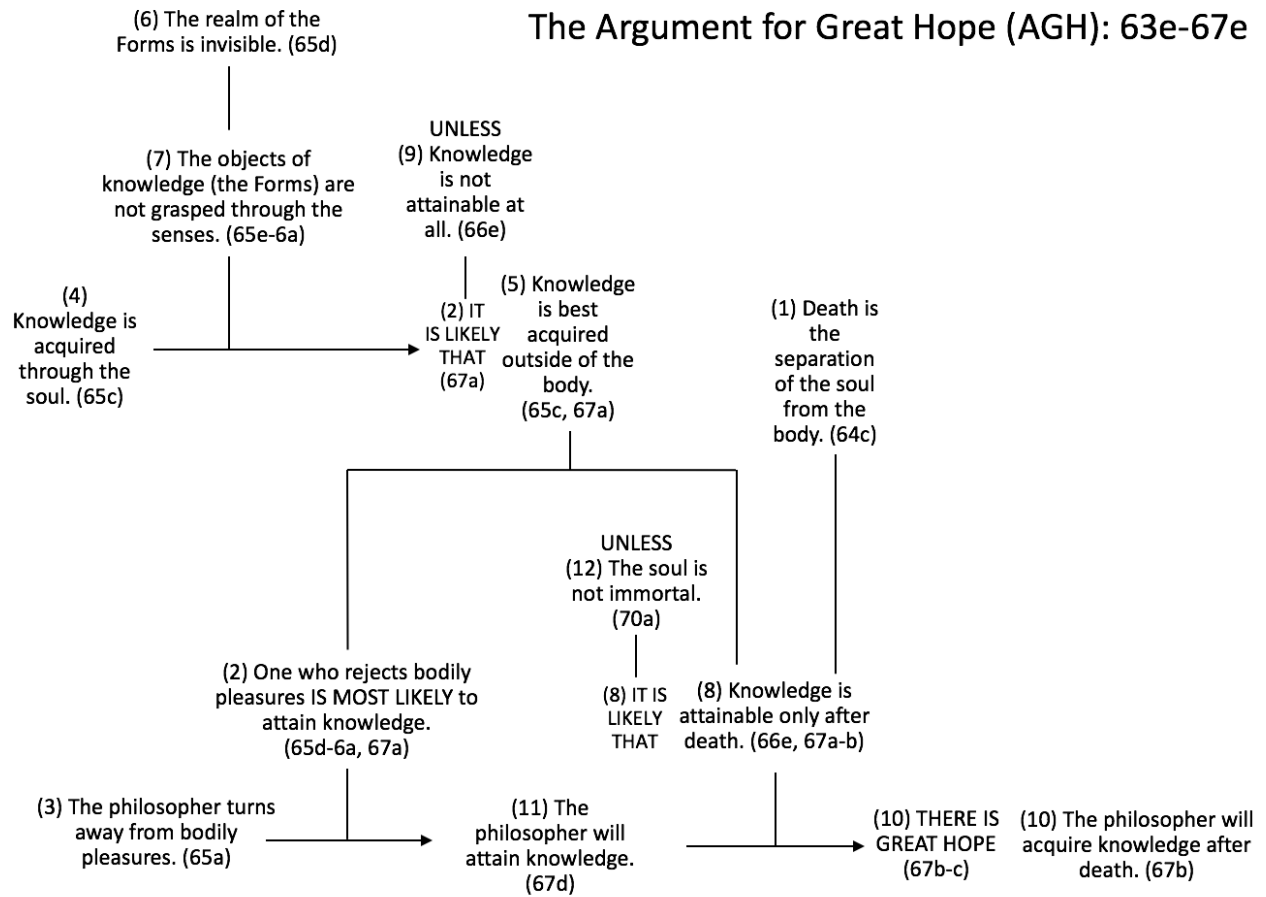


Figure 10

1. “Do we believe that some ‘death’ exists? ... Is it something other than the release of the soul from the body?” (ἡγοούμεθα τι τὸν θάνατον εἶναι; ... ἄρα μὴ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἀπαλλαγὴν; 64c2, 4-5).

2. This proposition is left unstated until quite close to the end of the argument, but it is suggested by Socrates' discussions of how the philosopher rejects bodily pleasures (64d-65a), and how true knowledge cannot be acquired through the body (65d-66a). Cf. 67a: "And while we are living, in this way, it seems, we will be closest to knowledge: if we keep company as little as possible with the body, and we do not take part in it, except when it is entirely necessary" (καὶ ἐν ᾧ ἂν ζῶμεν, οὕτως, ὥς ἔοικεν, ἐγγυτάτω ἐσόμεθα τοῦ εἰδέναι, ἐὰν ὅτι μάλιστα μηδὲν ὁμιλῶμεν τῷ σώματι μηδὲ κοινωνῶμεν, ὅτι μὴ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη, 67a2-4).
3. "The philosopher frees most of all the soul from association with the body, differently than other men." (ὁ φιλόσοφος ἀπολύων ὅτι μάλιστα τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ σώματος κοινωνίας διαφερόντως τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων, 65a1-2).
4. "Indeed is it not in reasoning if anywhere that something of what is comes to be discovered by it [the soul]?" (ἄρ' οὖν οὐκ ἐν τῷ λογίζεσθαι εἴπερ που ἄλλοθι κατάδηλον αὐτῇ γίγνεται τι τῶν ὄντων; 65c2-3).
5. E.g., "[The soul] reasons most at that time when none of these [senses] trouble it in addition." (λογίζεται δέ γέ που τότε κάλλιστα, ὅταν αὐτὴν τούτων μηδὲν παραλυπῇ, 65c5-6).
6. "Now have you ever seen one of those [Forms] with your eyes?" / "In no way," [Simias] said." ('ἤδη οὖν πώποτε τι τῶν τοιούτων τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς εἶδες; 'οὐδαμῶς,' ἢ δ' ὅς., 65d9-10).
7. "Then that one might do this most purely who most of all goes through each thing in thought itself, neither placing some appearance next to his thinking nor dragging in some another perception with his reasoning" (ἄρ' οὖν ἐκεῖνος ἂν τοῦτο ποιήσειεν καθαρῶτατα ὅστις ὅτι μάλιστα αὐτῇ τῇ διανοίᾳ ἴοι ἐφ' ἑκάστον, μήτε τιν' ὅπιν παρατιθέμενος ἐν τῷ διανοεῖσθαι μήτε τινὰ ἄλλην αἴσθησιν ἐφέλκων μηδεμίαν μετὰ τοῦ λογισμοῦ... 65e7-66a1).

8. “And then, it seems likely, that which we desire and of which we declare ourselves to be lovers—wisdom—will be for us, when we have died, as our argument shows, but not while we are living.” (καὶ τότε, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἡμῖν ἔσται οὗ ἐπιθυμοῦμέν τε καὶ φαμεν ἐρασταὶ εἶναι, φρονήσεως, ἐπειδὴν τελευτήσωμεν, ὡς ὁ λόγος σημαίνει, ζῶσιν δὲ οὐ, 66e1-4). Cf. 67a-b: “Having been cleansed and freed from the thoughtlessness of the body, we will be among things such as this, as is likely, and we will come to know through ourselves all things that are pure” καθαροὶ ἀπαλλαττόμενοι τῆς τοῦ σώματος ἀφροσύνης, ὡς τὸ εἶκος μετὰ τοιούτων τε ἐσόμεθα καὶ γνωσόμεθα δι’ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν πᾶν τὸ εἰλικρινές, 67a6-b1).

9. “If indeed it is not possible to come to know clearly with the body, one of two things [is the case]: either it is possible for no one to attain [a state of] knowing, or [one does so only] having died.” (εἰ γὰρ μὴ οἷόν τε μετὰ τοῦ σώματος μηδὲν καθαρῶς γινῶναι, δυοῖν θάτερον, ἢ οὐδαμοῦ ἔστιν κτήσασθαι τὸ εἰδέναι ἢ τελευτήσασιν, 66e4-6).

10. “Then if these things are true, [there is] great hope that, in having arrived where I am driven, likely there, if anywhere, I will acquire that which came to be a great occupation for me in my present life, so that that departure now commanded of me comes to be accompanied by good hope.” (οὐκοῦν, ... εἰ ταῦτα ἀληθῆ, ... πολλὴ ἐλπίς ἀφικομένῳ οἷ ἐγὼ πορεύομαι, ἐκεῖ ἱκανῶς, εἴπερ που ἄλλοθι, κτήσασθαι τοῦτο οὗ ἕνεκα ἢ πολλὴ πραγματεία ἡμῖν ἐν τῷ παρελθόντι βίῳ γέγονεν, ὥστε ἢ γε ἀποδημία ἢ νῦν μοι προστεταγμένη μετὰ ἀγαθῆς ἐλπίδος γίγνεται, 67b7-c2).

11. This proposition is left unstated, but is not at all inconsistent with Socrates’ overall argument, e.g., “Only those philosophizing rightly are eager always and most of all to free [the soul], and this very practice is of philosophers, the freeing and separating of the soul from the body.” (λύειν δὲ γε αὐτήν, ὡς φαμεν, προθυμοῦνται ἀεὶ μάλιστα καὶ μόνοι οἱ φιλοσοφοῦντες ὀρθῶς, καὶ τὸ μελέτημα αὐτὸ τοῦτό ἐστιν τῶν φιλοσόφων, λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, 67d7-10).

12. After Socrates give his argument, Cebes objects: “Those things about the soul give great disbelief to people that, whenever it is released from the body, it no longer still exists.” (τὰ δὲ περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς πολλὴν ἀπιστίαν παρέχει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις μή, ἐπειδὴν ἀπαλλαγῇ τοῦ σώματος, οὐδαμοῦ ἔτι ᾗ, 70a1-3).

A.2 Cyclical Argument

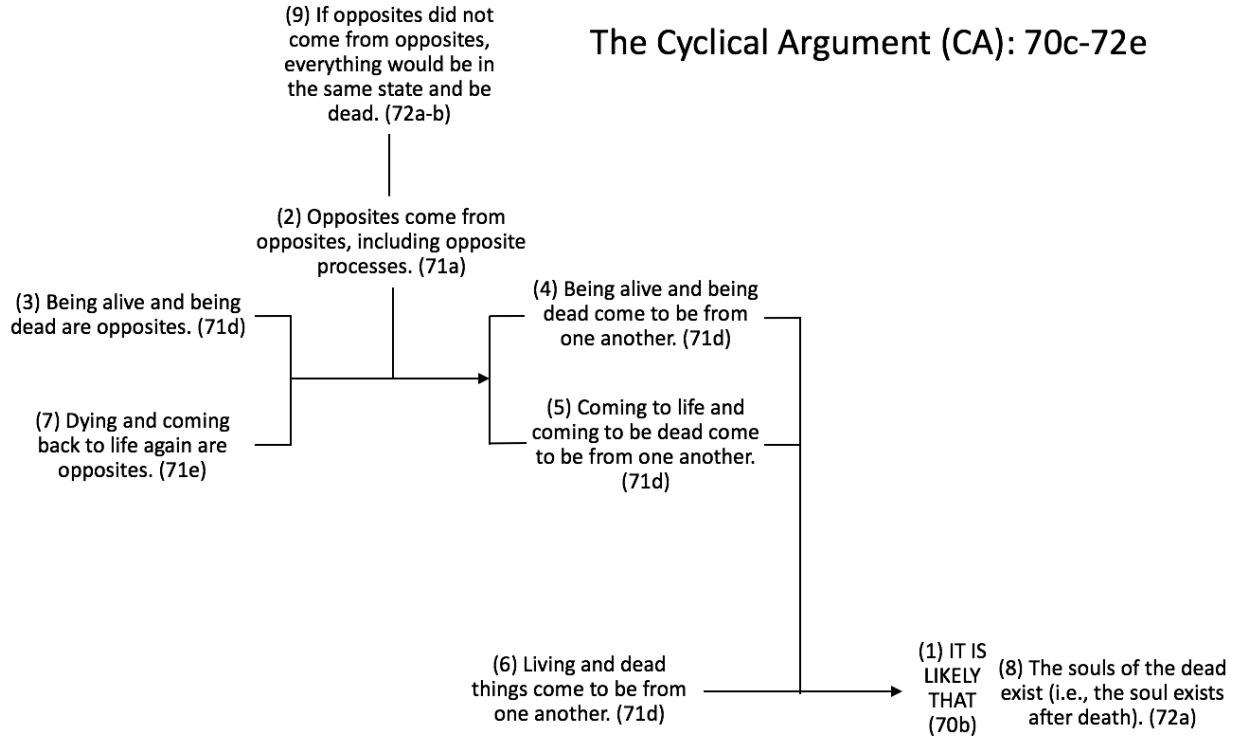


Figure 11

1. “Do you wish for us to discuss about these things whether they are likely or not?” (ἢ περὶ αὐτῶν τούτων βούλει διαμυθολογῶμεν, εἴτε εἰκὸς οὕτως ἔχειν εἴτε μή; 70b6-7).

2. Opposites: “We have borne this out sufficiently, then, that all things come to be in this way, opposite things from opposites?” (ικανῶς οὖν ... ἔχομεν τοῦτο, ὅτι πάντα οὕτω γίγνεται, ἐξ ἐναντίων τὰ ἐναντία πράγματα; 71a9-10). Opposite processes: “Then don’t these [processes] also come to be from the others, if indeed they are opposites, and the sources are between the two [opposite] beings themselves?” (οὐκοῦν ἐξ ἀλλήλων τε γίγνεται ταῦτα, εἴπερ ἐναντία ἐστίν, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις εἰσὶν αὐτοῖν μεταξὺ δύο δυοῖν ὄντων; 71c6-7).

3. “Would you not say that the opposite of to live is to die?” (οὐκ ἐναντίον μὲν φῆς τῷ ζῆν τὸ τεθνάναι εἶναι; 71d6).

4. [Follows proposition 3]: “[And would you not say that to live and to die] come to be from one another?” (γίγνεσθαι δὲ ἐξ ἀλλήλων; 71d8).
5. Socrates: “And what is the coming-to-be out of living?” Cebes: “Dying.” Socrates: “What [is the coming-to-be] out of dying?” Cebes: “...living” (Socrates: ἐξ οὗ τοῦ ζῶντος τί τὸ γιγνόμενον; Cebes: τὸ τεθνηκός. Socrates: τί δέ ... ἐκ τοῦ τεθνεῶτος; Cebes: ... τὸ ζῶν, 71d10-13).
6. “And from things having died, living things and living beings come to be?” (ἐκ τῶν τεθνεώτων ἄρα ... τὰ ζῶντά τε καὶ οἱ ζῶντες γίνονται; 71d14-15).
7. Socrates: “Or is it necessary to supply some source opposite to dying?” ... Cebes: “Coming back to life” (ἢ ἀνάγκη ἀποδοῦναι τῷ ἀποθνήσκειν ἐναντίαν τινὰ γένεσιν; ... τὸ ἀναβιώσκεσθαι, 71e9-10, 13).
8. “It seems to be a sufficient sign, anyway, that it is necessary that the souls of the dead are somewhere, from where they return to being” (ικανόν που ἐδόκει τεκμήριον εἶναι ὅτι ἀναγκαῖον τὰς τῶν τεθνεώτων ψυχὰς εἶναι που, ὅθεν δὴ πάλιν γίγνεσθαι, 72a6-8; cf. 72e).
9. “For if both comings-to-be did not always return to each other, do you know that all things, coming to an end, would have the same figure and would experience the same condition and would cease to come to be?” (εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἀεὶ ἀνταποδιδοίη τὰ ἕτερα τοῖς ἑτέροις γιγνόμενα, ... οἴσθ' ὅτι πάντα τελευτῶντα τὸ αὐτὸ σχῆμα ἂν σχοίη καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πάθος ἂν πάθοι καὶ παύσαιτο γιγνόμενα; 72a12-b1).

A.3 Recollection Argument

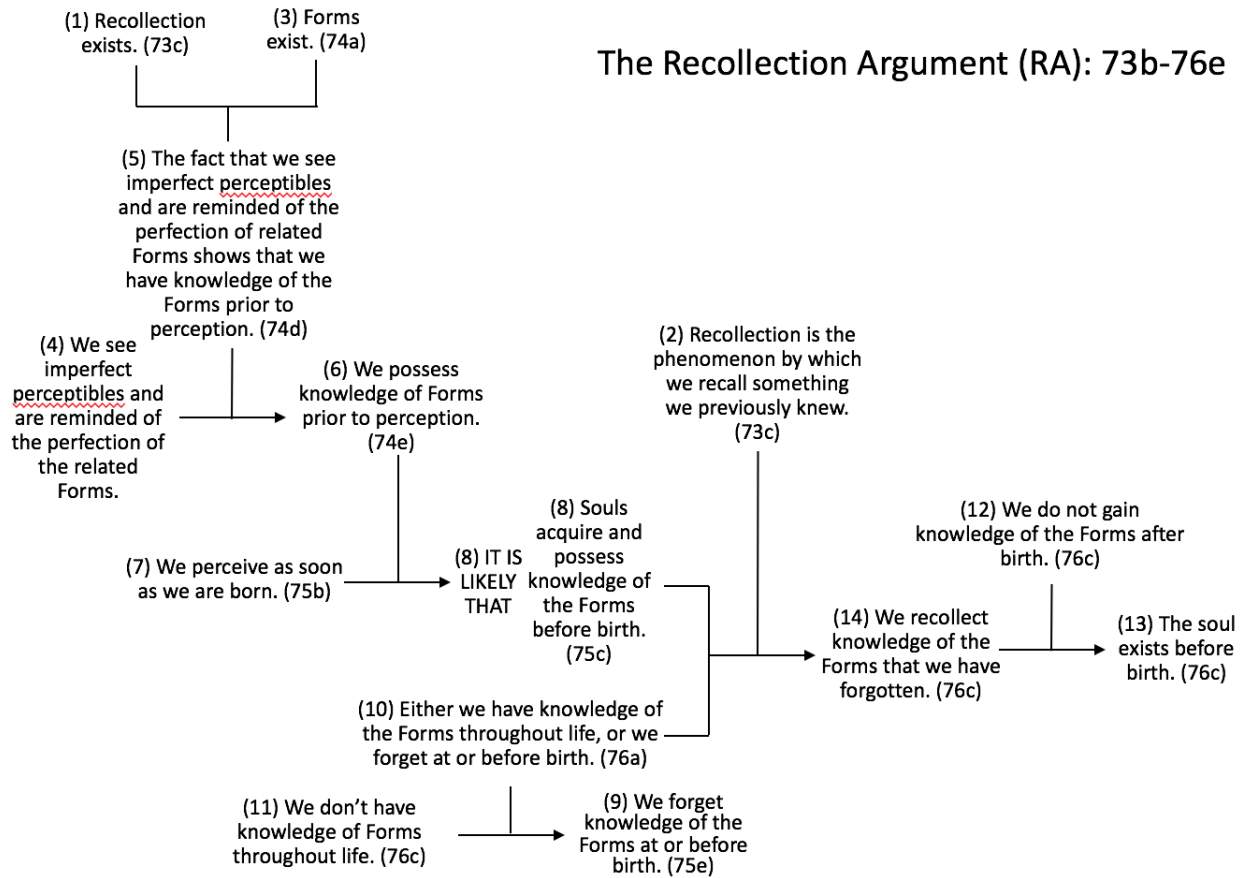


Figure 12

1. “If anyone recollects something, it is necessary that he knew it at some prior point” (εἴ τις τι ἀναμνησθήσεται, δεῖν αὐτὸν τοῦτο πρότερόν ποτε ἐπίστασθαι, 73c1-3).

2. “Surely we agree also on this: whenever knowledge comes to be gained in this sort of way, it is recollection? ...If someone, upon seeing or hearing or grasping another perception of something, should come to think of not only this, but also should come to reflect upon another thing, of which his knowledge is not the same, do we not speak rightly [in saying] that this is recollection?” (ἄρ’ οὖν καὶ τόδε ὁμολογοῦμεν, ὅταν ἐπιστήμη παραγίγνηται τρόπῳ τοιούτῳ, ἀνάμνησιν εἶναι; ...ἐάν τις τι ἕτερον ἢ ἰδὼν ἢ ἀκούσας ἢ τινα ἄλλην αἴσθησιν λαβὼν μὴ μόνον ἐκεῖνο γνῶ, ἀλλὰ καὶ

ἕτερον ἐννοήσῃ οὐ μὴ ἢ αὐτὴ ἐπιστήμη ἄλλ’ ἄλλη, ἄρα οὐχὶ τοῦτο δικαίως λέγομεν ὅτι ἀνεμνήσθη, 73c5-10).

3. “We say that there is some Equal, ...the Equal itself” (φαμέν πού τι εἶναι ἴσον, ... αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον, 74a9-10, 12).

4. “So long as, upon seeing one, you think of the other from the very sight, ...it is necessary ...that this comes to be recollection” (ἕως ἄν ἄλλο ἰδὼν ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς ὄψεως ἄλλο ἐννοήσῃς, ...ἀναγκαῖον, ...αὐτὸ ἀνάμνησιν γεγονέναι. 74c13-d2).

5. “Whenever someone, seeing something, thinks, ‘the thing which I now am seeing wants to be of another sort of being, but it falls short and is not able to be of the sort that is equal to that sort—rather, it is lower’—is it necessary for the one thinking this to somehow have prior knowledge of that thing?” (ὅταν τίς τι ἰδὼν ἐννοήσῃ ὅτι βούλεται μὲν τοῦτο ὃ νῦν ἐγὼ ὁρῶ εἶναι οἷον ἄλλο τι τῶν ὄντων, ἐνδεῖ δὲ καὶ οὐ δύναται τοιοῦτον εἶναι ἴσον οἷον ἐκεῖνο, ἀλλ’ ἔστιν φαυλότερον, ἀναγκαῖόν που τὸν τοῦτο ἐννοοῦντα τυχεῖν προειδότα ἐκεῖνο... ; 74d9-e1).

6. “It is necessary that we knew the Equal before that time when we first saw equal things [and] thought that all these things are grasping at the sort of thing the Equal [is], but they are deficient” (ἀναγκαῖον ἄρα ἡμᾶς προειδέναι τὸ ἴσον πρὸ ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου ὅτε τὸ πρῶτον ἰδόντες τὰ ἴσα ἐνενοήσαμεν ὅτι ὁρέγεται μὲν πάντα ταῦτα εἶναι οἷον τὸ ἴσον, ἔχει δὲ ἐνδεεστέρας. 74e9-75a2; cf. 75b).

7. “Having been born, immediately we were seeing and hearing and having the other perceptions?” (οὐκοῦν γενόμενοι εὐθὺς ἐωρῶμέν τε καὶ ἠκούομεν καὶ τὰς ἄλλας αἰσθήσεις εἶχομεν; 75b10-11).

8. “It is necessary that, before these [sensations of particulars], we grasped knowledge of the Equal? ...It is necessary, then, that before birth, as seems likely, we acquired this [knowledge] ”

(ἔδει δέ γε, ...πρὸ τούτων τὴν τοῦ Ἰσοῦ ἐπιστήμην εἰληφέναι; ...πρὶν γενέσθαι ἄρα, ὥς ἔοικεν, ἀνάγκη ἡμῖν αὐτὴν εἰληφέναι. 75c1-2, 4-5).

9. “I think that if, having grasped [knowledge] before we were born, then upon being born, we forgot, ...wouldn’t that which we call learning be re-grasping the knowledge that is within us? And perhaps calling this ‘recollection,’ we would be speaking rightly?” (εἰ δέ γε οἶμαι λαβόντες πρὶν γενέσθαι γιγνόμενοι ἀπωλέσαμεν, ... ἄρ’ οὐχ ὁ καλοῦμεν μανθάνειν οἰκείαν ἂν ἐπιστήμην ἀναλαμβάνειν εἴη; τοῦτο δέ που ἀναμνησκέσθαι λέγοντες ὀρθῶς ἂν λέγοιμεν; 75e2-3, 5-7).

10. “Either we were born knowing these things and we know them throughout our whole life, or, those whom we say are ‘learning’ [are in fact doing] nothing other than recollecting, and ‘learning’ would be recollection” (ἥτοι ἐπιστάμενοί γε αὐτὰ γεγόναμεν καὶ ἐπιστάμεθα διὰ βίου πάντες, ἢ ὕστερον, οὓς φάμεν μανθάνειν, οὐδὲν ἄλλ’ ἢ ἀναμνησκονται οὗτοι, καὶ ἡ μάθησις ἀνάμνησις ἂν εἴη, 76a4-7).

11. “Then they do not seem to you to know ...all these things? ...They are recollecting what they previously learned?” (οὐκ ἄρα δοκοῦσί σοι ἐπίστασθαι γε, ...πάντες αὐτά; ...ἀναμνησκονται ἄρα ἃ ποτε ἔμαθον; 76c1-2, 4).

12. “When did our souls grasp knowledge of these [Forms]? Surely not after when we came to be human?” (πότε λαβοῦσαι αἱ ψυχαὶ ἡμῶν τὴν ἐπιστήμην αὐτῶν; οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἀφ’ οὗ γε ἄνθρωποι γεγόναμεν, 76c6-7).

13. “Then our souls existed even before they were in the form of a human, apart from our bodies, and they had knowledge” (ἦσαν ἄρα, ὧς Σιμμία, αἱ ψυχαὶ καὶ πρότερον, πρὶν εἶναι ἐν ἀνθρώπου εἶδει, χωρὶς σωμάτων, καὶ φρόνησιν εἶχον, 76c11-12; cf. 77c).

14. [See proposition 13, above.]

A.4 Affinity Argument

The Affinity Argument (AA): 78b-84b

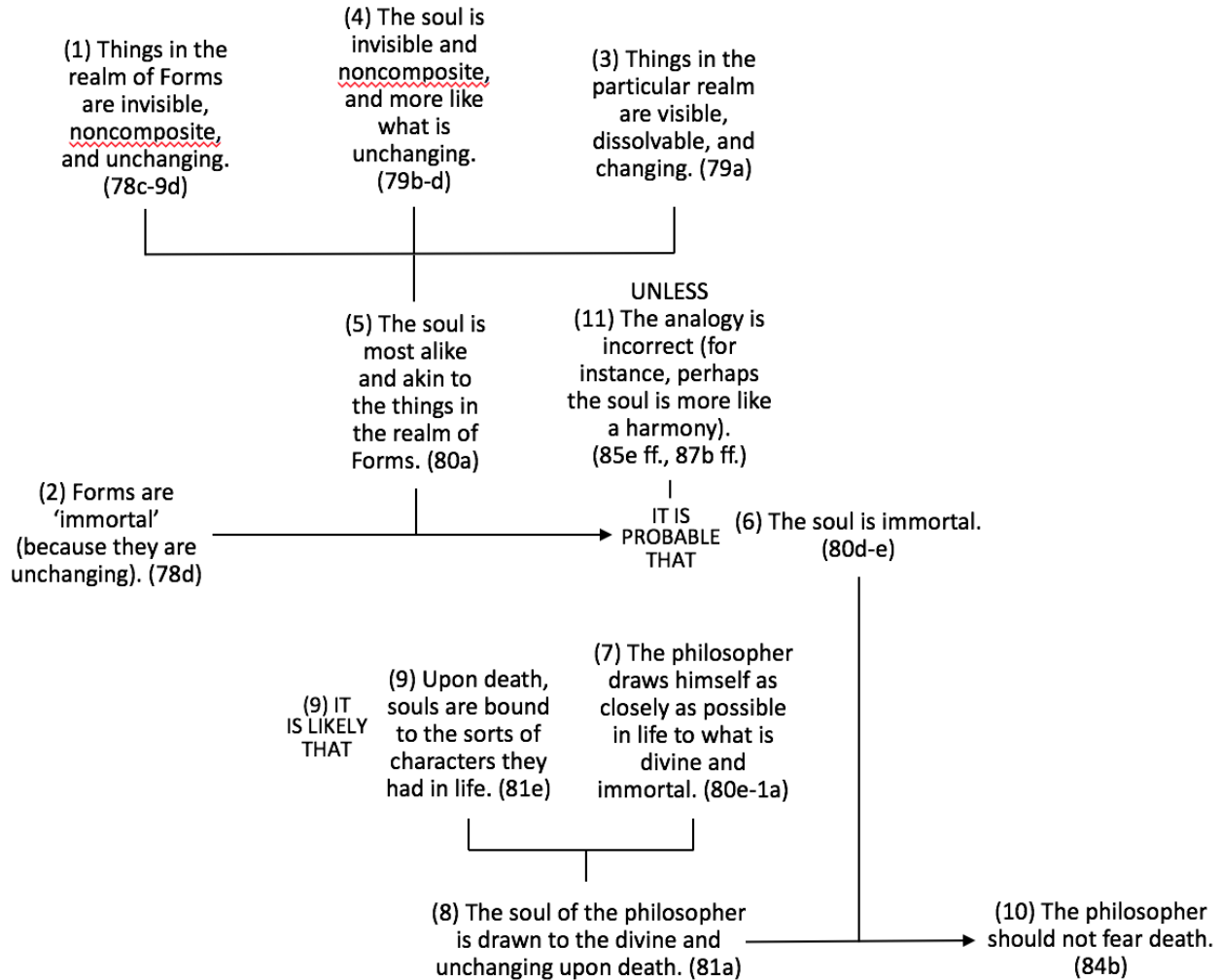


Figure 13

1. Forms are invisible: “But these such things are unseen and not visible?” (ἀλλ’ ἔστιν αἰδῆ τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ οὐχ ὁρατά; 79a4). Forms are noncomposite: “Then aren’t those things that are always in accordance with themselves and which remain in the same way likely most of all to be noncomposite? (οὐκοῦν ἅπερ αἰ κατὰ ταῦτα καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχει, ταῦτα μάλιστα εἰκὸς εἶναι τὰ ἀσύνθετα, 78c6-8). Forms are unchanging: “Or does each of these that is, uniform, itself by itself, remain just so in accordance with themselves, and never in any way admit any difference?” (ἢ αἰ

αὐτῶν ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστι, μονοειδὲς ὃν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό, ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχει καὶ οὐδέποτε οὐδαμῇ οὐδαμῶς ἀλλοίωσιν οὐδεμίαν ἐνδέχεται; 78d5-7).

2. Socrates: “Does the Equal itself, the Beautiful itself, and each thing itself that is—the reality—never accept any change whatsoever?” Cebes: “It is necessarily this way for each of these things” (Socrates: αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον, αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν, τὸ ὄν, μὴ ποτε μεταβολὴν καὶ ἡντινοῦν ἐνδέχεται; Cebes: ὡσαύτως ... ἀνάγκη ... κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχειν, 78d2-5, 8).

3. “What of the many beautiful things... are they entirely opposite to those [Forms] and not the same as themselves, neither in relation to one another nor even among themselves?” (τί δὲ τῶν πολλῶν καλῶν... πᾶν τούναντίον ἐκείνοις οὔτε αὐτὰ αὐτοῖς οὔτε ἀλλήλοις οὐδέποτε... οὐδαμῶς κατὰ ταῦτά; 78d10, 78e2-4).

4. Soul is invisible: “Then the soul is more like the unseen than the body, while the [body] [is more like] the visible” (ὁμοιότερον ἄρα ψυχὴ σώματός ἐστιν τῷ αἰδεῖ, τὸ δὲ τῷ ὀρατῷ, 79b16-7). Soul is noncomposite and unchanging: “Whenever [the soul] examines [something] itself by itself, it goes to the other realm, into what is pure and what is always deathless and is always in the same state, and since it is akin to this...” (ὅταν δέ γε αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτὴν σκοπῇ, ἐκεῖσε οἴχεται εἰς τὸ καθαρὸν τε καὶ αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ ἀθάνατον καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχον, καὶ ὡς συγγενὴς οὔσα αὐτοῦ..., 79d1-3).

5. “Consider...if, from all the things said, these things follow for us: that the soul is most equal to that which is divine and deathless and present to the mind and uniform and indissoluble and always remaining just so in accordance with itself” (σκόπει δὴ ... εἰ ἐκ πάντων τῶν εἰρημένων τάδε ἡμῖν συμβαίνει, τῷ μὲν θεῷ καὶ ἀθανάτῳ καὶ νοητῷ καὶ μονοειδεῖ καὶ ἀδιαλύτῳ καὶ αἰεὶ ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχοντι ἑαυτῷ ὁμοιότατον εἶναι ψυχὴ, 80a10-b3).

6. “Will the soul, as soon as it is released from the body, be immediately dispersed and destroyed? Far from it!” (ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἄρα ... ἀπαλλαττομένη τοῦ σώματος εὐθὺς διαπεφύσεται καὶ ἀπόλωλεν...; πολλοῦ γε δεῖ... 80d5, 9-10, 80e1).
7. “This is nothing other than philosophizing rightly and, in fact, practicing dying readily” (τὸ δὲ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ ὀρθῶς φιλοσοφοῦσα καὶ τῷ ὄντι τεθνάναι μελετῶσα ῥαδίως: 80e6-81a1).
8. “Then holding itself in this way, the soul departs into what is like to itself—to the unseen, and the divine and the deathless and intelligible” (οὐκοῦν οὕτω μὲν ἔχουσα εἰς τὸ ὅμοιον αὐτῇ τὸ αἰδὲς ἀπέρχεται, τὸ θεῖόν τε καὶ ἀθάνατον καὶ φρόνιμον, 81a4-5).
9. “[Souls] are bound, as is fitting, into the sorts of characters which they happen to have practiced in life” (ἐνδοῦνται δέ, ὥσπερ εἰκός, εἰς τοιαῦτα ἥθη ὅποῖ’ ἅτ’ ἂν καὶ μεμελετηκυῖαι τύχωσιν ἐν τῷ βίῳ, 81e2-4).
10. “From such nourishment, there is no danger that one would fear ... that [the soul] would be torn apart ... and no longer be anywhere” (ἐκ δὴ τῆς τοιαύτης τροφῆς οὐδὲν δεινὸν μὴ φοβηθῇ, ... ὅπως μὴ διασπασθεῖσα ... καὶ οὐδὲν ἔτι οὐδαμοῦ ᾗ, 84b3-5, 7).
11. Simmias objects after Socrates’ argument that perhaps the soul is more like a harmony (85e-86d), while Cebes suggests that the soul is to the body as a man is to the set of cloaks he wears out in his lifetime (87b-88b).

A.5 Final Argument

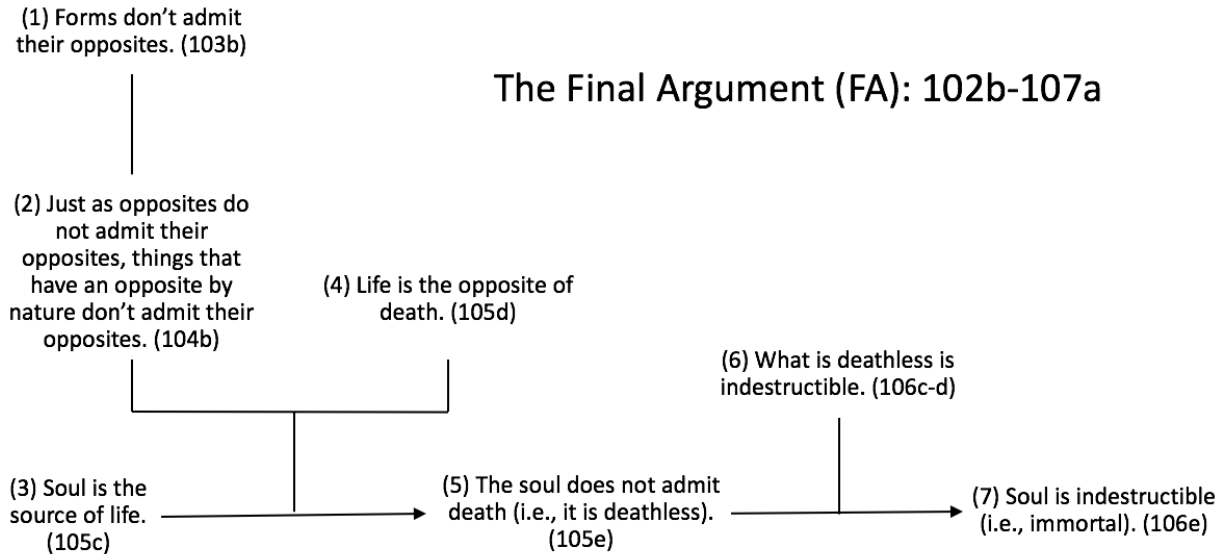


Figure 14

1. “Now [we are saying] that an opposite itself could not ever come to be opposite to itself” (νῦν δέ, ὅτι αὐτὸ τὸ ἐναντίον ἑαυτῷ ἐναντίον οὐκ ἂν ποτε γένοιτο, 103b4-5; cf. 103c, 104c).
2. “It seems that not only those opposites do not admit of one another, but also those things which, [although] not being opposite one another, [nevertheless] always have the opposites...” (φαίνεται οὐ μόνον ἐκεῖνα τὰ ἐναντία ἀλλήλα οὐ δεχόμενα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσα οὐκ ὄντ’ ἀλλήλοις ἐναντία ἔχει ἀεὶ τὰναντία... 104b7-9; cf. 104c).
3. Socrates: “Then whatever soul itself occupies, it always comes upon that thing bringing life?” Cebes: “Indeed it brings [life].” (ψυχὴ ἄρα ὅτι ἂν αὐτὴ κατὰσχη, ἀεὶ ἦκει ἐπ’ ἐκεῖνο φέρουσα ζωὴν; Cebes: ἦκει μέντοι, 105d3-4).
4. Socrates: “Is there some opposite to life or none?” Cebes: “...Death.” (Socrates: πότερον δ’ ἔστι τι ζωῆς ἐναντίον ἢ οὐδέν; Cebes: ...θάνατος, 105d6, 9).

5. “Then the soul does not admit of death?” (οὐκοῦν ψυχὴ οὐ δέχεται θάνατον; 105e4).

6. “Then also now about what is deathless—if it is agreed by us that it is also indestructible, the soul would be, from its deathlessness, also indestructible?” (οὐκοῦν καὶ νῦν περὶ τοῦ ἀθανάτου, εἰ μὲν ἡμῖν ὁμολογεῖται καὶ ἀνώλεθρον εἶναι, ψυχὴ ἂν εἴη πρὸς τῷ ἀθάνατος εἶναι καὶ ἀνώλεθρος: 106c9-d1; cf. 106 d-e).

7. “Rather the soul is deathless entirely and indestructible, and in reality our souls are in Hades” (παντὸς μᾶλλον ἄρα, ... ψυχὴ ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον, καὶ τῷ ὄντι ἔσονται ἡμῶν αἱ ψυχαὶ ἐν ᾗιδου, 106e8-107a1).

A.6 The Myth

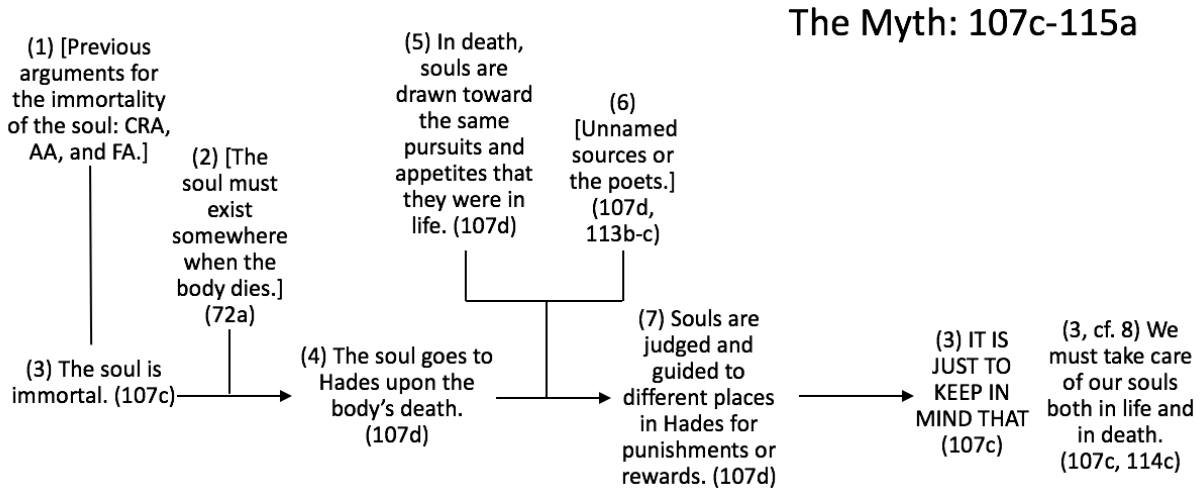


Figure 15

1. Socrates' three previous arguments (CRA, AA, and FA) argued that the soul is immortal.
2. This is proposition 8 in the CA section of the CRA (72a6-8), quoted in full in Appendix A.
3. Both the Claim from the previous arguments and the hypothesis that introduces the myth: "But it is just to keep this in mind, that, since indeed the soul is deathless, it is necessary to [give it] care not only for this time that we call living, but for all time..." (ἀλλὰ τόδε γ'... δίκαιον διανοηθῆναι, ὅτι, εἴπερ ἡ ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος, ἐπιμελείας δὴ δεῖται οὐχ ὑπὲρ τοῦ χρόνου τούτου μόνον ἐν ᾧ καλοῦμεν τὸ ζῆν, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τοῦ παντός..., 107c1-4).
4. "...The soul goes to Hades..." (...εἰς Ἅιδου ἡ ψυχὴ ἔρχεται..., 107d3).
5. Suggested by, e.g., "For the soul goes to Hades holding on to nothing other than its education and nurture, which are said most of all to aid or to harm immediately upon dying, in the beginning of the journey to that place" (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο ἔχουσα εἰς Ἅιδου ἡ ψυχὴ ἔρχεται πλὴν τῆς παιδείας τε καὶ τροφῆς, ἃ δὴ καὶ μέγιστα λέγεται ὠφελεῖν ἢ βλάπτειν τὸν τελευτήσαντα εὐθὺς ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς ἐκεῖσε πορείας, 107d2-5).

6. Regarding the judgment of souls: "...which *are said* most of all to aid or to harm immediately upon dying..." (...ἃ δὴ καὶ μέγιστα λέγεται ὠφελεῖν ἢ βλάπτειν τὸν τελευτήσαντα εὐθὺς..., 107d4-5); "*It is said* thus..." (λέγεται δὲ οὕτως, 107d5). Regarding the geography of Hades: "...as *it is said*" (ὥς λέγεται, 113b8); "...as the *poets say*..." (ὥς οἱ ποιηταὶ λέγουσιν, 113c8-9).
7. "It is necessary that they, having submitted themselves for judgment, be brought into Hades..." (δεῖ τοὺς ... διαδικασαμένους εἰς Ἅιδου πορεύεσθαι, 107d8-e1).
8. "But on account of these things which we have recounted, it is necessary, Simmias, to do everything in order to have a share of virtue and wisdom in life: for the reward is beautiful and the hope vast" (ἀλλὰ τούτων δὴ ἕνεκα χρὴ ὧν διεληλύθαμεν, ὦ Σιμμία, πᾶν ποιεῖν ὥστε ἀρετῆς καὶ φρονήσεως ἐν τῷ βίῳ μετασχεῖν: καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἄθλον καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς μεγάλη, 114c6-9).

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